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Special paperbacks issue

TRESTRAIL:

VICTIM OF PREJUDICE

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NEW STATESMAN Vol 104 No 2680 30 July 1982

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Trestrail: a victim of prejudice
Homesexuality among men over 21 is legal; it is also, apparently, a matter for blackmail. Leader: this page. Labour's nervousness: page 3. Andrew Lumsden, editor of *Gay News*, asks why gays 'are not worth a mature political analysis': page 6.

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Tel: 01-405 8471. Telex: 28449
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Where homosexuals belong

COMMANDER TRESTRAIL was by all accounts a punctilious, loyal and popular bodyguard to the Queen. His resignation (and the evidence that he was not vetted for his homosexual tendencies) has been almost universally used as further proof of police laxity, corruption and inefficiency. It is nothing of the kind. Commander Trestrail has quite simply been the victim of entrenched prejudice against homosexuals.

The traditional liberal apology for treating all homosexuals as a potential threat to State security is that they are uniquely vulnerable to blackmail. Commander Trestrail was indeed subject to one blackmail attempt three years ago. It failed completely, as blackmail always will when the intended victim refuses to sucumb. There was therefore no justification for the Attorney General, Sir Michael Havers, airing his retrospective opinion that his 'worst fears' had been confirmed by news of the failed blackmail attempt. Commander Trestrail was not the victim of actual or potential blackmail. He was the victim of a prostitute who wanted money from the *Sun* and of the *Sun* which wanted increased publicity and the spurious mantle of moral probity.

The *Sun* with unconvincing primness made much of the fact that it had refused to pay the prostitute. But the fact is that if papers like the *Sun* did not have a well established reputation for paying money to sexual supergrasses and then using the information gained to the maximum salacious and commercial effect, then the entire situation could not have arisen. Indeed the concept of homsexuality being the basis of potential vulnerability to blackmail is wholly circular and self-fulfilling. If society did not work on the assumption that (in particular male) homosexuals were a security risk, there would be no pressure to conceal the fact or liability to blackmail or fear of exposure.

Since Vassall, Burgess and Blunt, an almost automatic link is made in the media between homosexuality and treason, actual or potential. Yet in fact the overwhelming majority of those found guilty of treason, or of serious offences under the Official Secrets Act, have been heterosexual. And where homosexual men have engaged in treasonable activity in the past, there is no evidence that blackmail played any consistent or major part.

Homosexuals' vulnerability to blackmail was one reason advanced for reform of the law relating to homosexuals by the Wolfenden committee in 1957. Wolfenden is credited with having created the conditions that made such reform possible. In fact, however male homosexual acts remained criminal until 1967 in England and Wales; and until 1981 in Scotland. They are still criminal in Northern Ireland and in the armed services. Thus, though the arguments in favour of equity for homosexuals were substantially carried by Wolfenden a quarter of a century ago, the pace at which politicians have been prepared to bring the laws concerned with sexual morality and practice up to date has been hugely influenced and slowed by perceptions of public prejudice.

TO ITS CREDIT the Labour government in 1967 gave encouragement to the reform of the basic legislation affecting homosexual acts. Even then it, like Wolfenden, kowtowed to prejudice and accepted totally illogical compromises, such as the fact that the age of consent should be 21 for males, instead of 16 as is the case with heterosexual acts: and the fact that the reform was not applied to members of the armed forces. The Labour Party and other radical organisations must now face the issue of sexual rights and social and political attitudes towards homosexuals as a serious and central part of the political agenda; and not as a fringe issue to be avoided if at all possible.

It is not unusual for sexual scandals to be thrust into the headlines to explain corruption or incompetence within the establishment. But corruption will not abruptly end with the enforcement of strict codes of conventional family life and it is sheer hypocrisy of politicians and journalists to identify sexual non-conformity as the fatal flaw in the management of the country's affairs. What such periodic scandals do illuminate, however, is the importance of attitudes about sexual roles and relations to the conduct of public life. As such, they can never be dismissed as peripheral political issues.

The time is now overdue for the Labour Party, far from shuffling off the issue as it seems intent on doing, to take the lead in advancing beyond Wolfenden. Specifically, there is no reason why the age of consent for male homosexual acts should not be reduced to 16. And there is no reason to continue treating homosexuals in the armed forces as criminals. The argument that discipline and decency make the armed forces a special case in society has no substance. The armed forces need discipline and decency, but they need it from heterosexuals in precisely the same degree. The Labour Party should now take a positive lead in this area of civil rights. □

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Bob Cant and Sarah Benton on Labour's homophobia

No gay sex, please, we're socialist

AT THE ANNUAL conference of the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights last weekend, the main talking point was the unexpected rejection by the National Executive Committee of proposals to make the law on sexual acts between men the same as that on sex between men and women. About fifty people attended the conference, mostly men, and spent most of the time discussing how to concentrate the Labour Party's mind on the importance of sexuality as a political issue.

As the party which introduced the law legalising sexual acts between consenting males over 21 and in private, many Labour leaders had assumed the issued was closed. Yet between 1970 and 1980 the number of men found guilty of sexual offences against other men in England and Wales rose from 2102 to 4032. At the most, only 1113 of those found guilty in 1980 had harassed or been violent towards another man. But many of those prosecuted would not have been had they behaved in the same way to a woman over 16.

Two years ago, concerned at the continuing discrimination against gay people, the Labour Party's Human Rights Committee published a discussion document, called 'Rights for gay men and women'. There it argued for, amongst other things, the age of consent to be the same for all forms of sexual activity between consenting adults. The response ranged from enthusiasm to indifference. But there was no hostility.

Nonetheless, when the draft of Labour's Programme '82 included the demand that the age of consent should be the same for all, consternation broke out on the Home Policy Affairs Committee. The demand must be excised, voted the Committee, or the Labour Party would lose votes.

Joan Lestor, a member of the committee, dismissed this argument. Those who put it forward were, she thought, 'out of touch with public opinion.' In her experience, which included efforts to introduce more radical policies against racism, 'those who claim they are deferring to other people's prejudices are nearly always trying to conceal their own' she said.

The issue was then raised again at the National Executive Committee in June. This time, in response to repeated fears about ending discrimination against gay men, Joan Lestor and Jo Richardson introduced a compromise amendment that the age of consent for male homosexual activities should be 18. This was passed. But other proposals in the draft, including the right of members in the armed forces to have homosexual sex, and a commitment to campaign against anti-homosexual myths, disappeared without trace.

LABOUR'S campaign for Gay Rights, set up eight years ago but revitalised last year, failed to lobby the NEC. They had not anticipated its decision. They will now concentrate on lobbying the next Labour Party Conference. On Conference agenda, at number 514 out of 518 motions, there is a branch proposal that the Labour Party adopt the draft Bill on Sexual Offences, drawn up by the Campaign for Homosexual Equality.

Gay activist John Shiers says that beyond the 'short-term' aims of changing Labour Party policy on the law, the Campaign hopes to 'change the Party's notion of what is political'. In this the Campaign reflects the influx into the Party over the last two years of members drawn from the libertarian Left and from the Communist Party, International Marxist Group and Socialist Workers Party, all of which adopted policies opposing discrimination against gays during the 1970s. It is not, however, a clear Left/Right division. Many Left-wingers see homosexual acts as the bourgeois indulgences of a decadent ruling class. Discussing the former, they insist, will merely divert the Party's attention from abolishing the latter. □

See Andrew Lumsden, editor of Gay News, p.6.

Duncan Campbell on a muck-raking journal

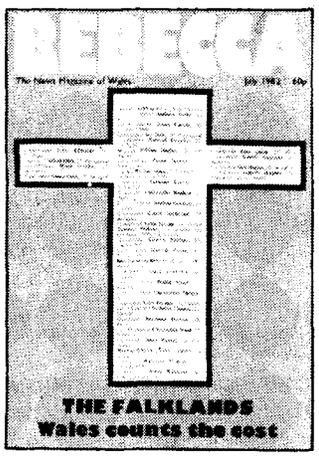
Failed in Wales

THE WELSH RADICAL MONTHLY magazine *Rebecca* has stopped publication after 10 years. For the last year, the magazine held onto the highest circulation of any English language news magazine in Wales. But it has proved not to be financially viable.

Welsh political and cultural institutions, however, have shown considerable aversion to feeding those that bite them. Although the magazine was rooted strongly in the Welsh labour and socialist movement, the Welsh TUC gave no financial support and often cold-shouldered its enquiries. On its demise, a Welsh TUC spokesman commented that the error of *Rebecca's* ways had been in 'backing the rank and file movement – union members who support shop floor power and often oppose their union's leaders'.

The attitude of the Welsh TUC suggests some of the difficulties which any of the widely-canvassed proposals for a TUC-backed national paper would face from such sponsorship. Of *Rebecca's* hopes for wide union support, a Welsh TUC spokesman said 'when they are trying to find out what is wrong with these institutions, it is not surprising that the institutions do not help so much'.

During the 1970s, *Rebecca* – in its first incarnation – dug deep into the Welsh labour establishment. An early campaign placed the (labour) leader of Swansea Council in jail. Other investigations had examined



property deals in his own constituency by Leo Abse, MP, and the financial wheeling and dealing of Julian Hodge, a close friend of Jim Callaghan, George Thomas and other luminaries of the Welsh Labour Party.

Offence was clearly taken there and elsewhere. Whilst *Rebecca's* seven workers (five of them reporters) battled to make ends meet on wages of £70 a week another English language publication, the fortnightly *Arcade*, received grants of over £60,000 from the Welsh Arts Council, yet seldom reached more than a quarter of *Rebecca's* circulation (which finished around 7,500). Ironically, both magazines had originally been competitors for the Arts Council grant. The Council's specialist literature panel recommended that the grant be given to *Rebecca* – stressing, in a specially commissioned report, that 'serious investigative journalism' would be an important feature of the magazine which should be chosen for sponsorship. However the Council overturned this proposal. □

Rob Edwards reports on a Scottish property boom

Edinburgh dishes it out

EDINBURGH IS witnessing a dramatic burst of property speculation, with developers using public money to make private profit, as a result of changed rules for improvement grants.

In June last year, the government used the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act to repeal the provision under which local authorities could demand repayment of an improvement grant, if the property involved was sold shortly after being improved (within three years in Edinburgh). The purpose of this provision, which was introduced by Labour in 1974, was to prevent developers using improvement grants to upgrade properties and then immediately selling them. Its removal has opened the door to speculative buying.

In one instance a company called Kantel Ltd bought 57 tenement flats in Edinburgh's Southside for £75,000 from the District Council. The company then got improvement grants totalling nearly £330,000 from the council and is now selling, or has sold, over half the flats for a total of over £600,000.

As unimproved flats in Edinburgh are snapped up by property companies, their market price is rising. Some companies advertise regularily in the local press, offering to buy unmodernised flats plus contents for immediate cash.

The number of improvement grant applications in the city has rocketed from 28 a week in 1980 to 76 a week this year, while the amount spent by the council on grants has risen from £3.3million in 1980-81 to a projected £8.3 million for 1982-83. Normal council staff have been unable to cope with this increase, so staff employed as part of the specially designated housing action area teams have been obliged to help out. So the boom is damaging efforts to improve the conditions of low-income householders living in run-down areas.

Another consequence is to increase the difficulties faced by housing associations competing for property in the city centre. Dave Clark, the research officer for the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, said that this meant that "people who want to live in the inner city and can't afford to buy are being elbowed out". He also pointed out that as a general rule the improvement work done by property companies was not as good as that normally done by housing associations.

Edinburgh District Council is proud of its record on house improvements and proud of the fact that it is the only authority in Scotland which since 1980 has spent more on private sector housing (via improvements and loans) than on the public sector. The 14,000 families waiting for a council house in the city are somwhat less pleased. For the council's own house building programme has ground to a halt – in 1981 the district did not start building a single house. □

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Jane Houlton on the new MSC scheme

Sweated labour

SIR GEOFFREY HOWE'S announcement of a 'new' community work programme for the long-term unemployed during the Commons debate on unemployment on Tuesday was a gimmick. The 'extra' £150 million had already been allocated (and announced) in the Budget in March. The news was that the Manpower Services Commission, after months of controversy and wrangles, had finally reached agreement on how the £150 million should be spent.

The MSC's proposals for the scheme to start in October are an unhappy compromise. In February the government rejected the Commission's request to expand the Community Enterprise Programme (CEP), on which 30,000 long-term unemployed are paid £89 a week for up to a year to do community work. Instead, in the Budget, the Tories proposed to pay 100,000 participants on a new community work scheme (to run alongside the CEP) no more than unemployment and social security benefits, plus £15 a week expenses.

The final compromise, arrived at this week, will provide 130,000 places by 1983 and will pay an average of £60 a week to each participant. The CEP will be absorbed into the new scheme. The "rate for the job" (defined as a *maximum* £2.22 per hour) will be paid, thus fulfilling a primary condition of the TUC's consent to the scheme. What this means in practice, however, is that, in order to meet the £60 a week average

Howe: low budget jobs gimmick

pay, considerable numbers of participants will have to work part-time. And, on projects where those who are more skilled are only allowed to earn up to the maximum £88 per week, less skilled workers on the same project will have to earn considerably less, or work part-time.

The MSC has had little room to manoeuvre. In the words of Alun Gronow of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, "We're getting the best we can out of it – given where we started." The Government, while resolutely refusing any expansion of the respected CEP, has let it be known by all that the money on offer would be withdrawn if no compromise acceptable to it could be reached. The Government's definition of 'acceptable' clearly meant widening the gap between the money paid to those on the MSC scheme and wages for those in work. □

Marion Bowman on police book raids

'Obscene' drugs books seized

FAT FREDDY and the Furry Freak Brothers will shortly be making the acquaintance of the Director of Public Prosecutions, following a new turn in police enforcement of the Obscene Publications Act.

The cult comic characters feature in material seized in a series of police raids in the past fortnight on booksellers in London, Manchester and Bristol when literature relating to drugs was impounded.

Over a period of nine days, police officers with warrants under Section 3 of the Act visited four booksellers – the London wholesalers, Airlift and Knockabout Comics, and retailers Grassroots of Manchester and Medina, a small paraphernailia shop in Bristol. Among titles seized in the raids were academic works, comics, handbooks like 'How to grow Marihuana in the British Isles', 'Marihuana Laws of the World' (which lists penalties for Marihuana offences in different countries), and pamphlets on heroin and glue sniffing by Release, the Drugs Counselling organisation.

A customer who witnessed the police visit to Grassroots said the two officers from Chief Constable Anderton's Obscene Publications Squad, Sergeant Todd and Constable Stapleton, looked 'rather embarrassed'. A spokeswoman for Airlift commented. 'The police were here for about six hours and seemed a little inexperienced. They didn't appear to know what they were looking for.'

The seizures are being interpreted in the books trade as a renewed attempt to test the climate of opinion on the scope of the obscenity law. The DPP will have to decide whether the material taken in the raid is 'likely to corrupt or deprave' thus warranting destruction orders from local magistrates.

If summonses are issued, the onus is on the bookseller to convince a magistrate that the material is not obscene. Retailers of pornography, the usual object of police activity, are refunded by wholesalers when destruction orders are made. However it is unlikely that the small 'alternative' trade which markets drugs books could stand significant losses. Airlift estimate their seized goods as being worth several thousands of pounds.

Tony Bennett, a Knockabout Comics director, said their last run in with the law over drugs related literature was in 1978 when 200 copies of an American pamphlet 'Doctor Atomic's Marihuana Multiplier,' were seized by Customs and passed on to the Obscene Publications Squad. They were returned after the DPP decided no further action should be taken.

A book trade expert said the police normally acted on complaints from members of the public. But the link between these recent raids indicated something different. 'Someone with influence has decided they don't like all this drugs literature and the police are having tests run to see if the DPP will take it further,' Bennett commented. □

James Martin reports from Brent

'Rigged' votes row

IMPORTANT changes governing the membership of the Labour Party are likely to be recommended to the National Executive Committee following a top-level inquiry into the running of Brent Labour Party.

The inquiry, led by MPs Eric Heffer and Neil Kinnock and national agent David Hughes, is expected to suggest that in future new ward members must be in the party for at least a year before voting at meetings to select prospective councillors and before qualifying as delegates for constituency general committees.

The inquiry also wants the powers of the local government committees – the top Labour borough-wide organisation – to be clarified following complaints by the right that the Bennite-left-dominated LGC in Brent heavily influenced the selection and short-listing meetings of candidates before the council elections in May.

The recommendations are likely to go to the organisation committee before the autumn, but it is thought unlikely that they will be formulated in time for debate at this year's party conference.

The Brent inquiry, which went on for three nights, was set up to investigate complaints over membership and allegations by the right of vote rigging by the left to gain control of key positions in the general management committees and of packing selection meetings with new – usually Asian – supporters of left wing candidates.

The inquiry is expected to respond to these complaints by trying to trim the powers of local government committees by confining their role to one of organisation and timetabling meetings rather than, as in Brent, acting as a focus for the political infighting.

For its part, the Bennite left in Brent says the allegations of manipulating the rule book represent nothing more than sour grapes by a bunch of disgruntled ex-councillors and aggrieved but unrepresentative individuals. □

Martin Howell reports on a major GLC investment

Saved from the receiver

THE GREATER LONDON COUNCIL is poised to spend £2½ million to save 350 jobs at a furniture firm. The rescue operation at Austinsuite in Leyton, East London would be the largest intervention in private industry of its kind ever made by County Hall. It marks a major advance in GLC industrial policy.

In return for the cash injection the GLC would be guaranteed worker participation and a share of any subsequent profits. It means a partnership between the GLC and the managing director of a neighbouring furniture firm, Ian Fraser of Bluestones. The money will come from the £40 million lodged with the London Enterprise Board.

The main planks of the plan are:

- A subsidy of £20 per job per week, worth £500,000 over 17 months.
- Purchase of the company's leasehold property rights in Leyton for £1.3 million and the purchase of the freehold to the site from Waltham Forest Council for £500,000.
- A rent free 'holiday' worth £200,000.

Without the intervention Austinsuite would have brought in the receiver soon after suspending its shares on the stock exchange a month ago. Last week the Labour group pushed the scheme through the GLC's Finance and General Purposes Committee. The decision to save the firm was taken despite gloomy economic forecasts from consultants employed by the GLC to examine the company's books. A rescue failed to get off the ground in early June after one such forecast went to the council's Industry and Employment Committee. But a political decision has now been taken to save the majority of the jobs involved. Consultants Arthur Andersen have, however, warned in a confidential report that it is 'a high risk venture in property terms.' □

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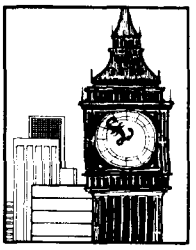


PETER KELLNER, Political Editor

Exposed: the great productivity myth

DURING THE LAST few weeks – though with the Palace scandals following hard on the Falklands war, few outsiders can have realised it – monetarism has been driven into its last redoubt.

Already, by the beginning of this year, the main original case for monetarism had been overrun by events. You could switch from direct to indirect taxation, and double VAT to 15 per cent, without increasing inflation, said the monetarists – yet inflation promptly doubled. You could squeeze the money supply without affecting output or unemployment, they said – yet manufacturing output fell by 20 per cent, and unemployment doubled.

Come this spring, however, the more optimistic ministers were proclaiming the clear presence of silver lining to the clouds. The prospects no longer look so cheery. Output is not so much recovering as bumping along near the bottom of the trough; and the CBI now reports that its members' brief flurry of optimism about the future is over.

One last major claim is being made in the Government's defence. It is that Britain's recent productivity record is truly remarkable, matching the best that Germany or Japan have ever sustained. This is the one substantial argument for the Thatcher experiment against which nobody has yet mounted an effective assault. It is time the barrage began.

NOT SURPRISINGLY, ministers quote the figures that they think best support their argument. In his budget speech Sir Geoffrey Howe said:

> Productivity has been rising sharply. In manufacturing industry last year, output per man rose by about 10 per cent.

Last Monday, Lord Cockfield, the trade secretary, brought the figure up-to-date:

> Output per head in manufacturing has risen by 12 per cent since the end of 1980.

Chart one shows what Howe and Cockfield were talking about. Output per person has indeed risen sharply since the fourth quarter of 1980 – after falling sharply in the previous year and a half.

It does indeed seem a remarkable achievement. Historically, the trend rate since the late 1960s has been about two per cent a year. So since the end of 1980, British manufacturers have 'beaten the trend' by 8 percentage points.

Would that things were so simple, or the picture so rosy. The 'V'-shape of the productivity line in chart one stems largely from the way the recession hammered the manufacturing job market. Between October 1979 and 1980, overall employment in manufacturing fell by less than 10 per cent, while output fell by 15 per cent – hence the fall in productivity. But that conceals a sharp shake-out in factory-floor jobs ('operatives' in Department of Employment jargon). For every 100 factory floor jobs lost in that time, only 17 administrative, clerical and technical jobs went. What is more, the operatives who were left worked fewer hours. In late 1979 more than one-third of all operatives did overtime; in late 1980 only one-quarter did. The number of operative hours spent on the factory floor actually fell faster than output.

In 1981 the pattern changed. Lay-offs of operatives slowed down, and overtime picked up. On the other hand, the shake-out of non-operative staff got underway. For every 100 factory floor jobs lost last year, as many as 54 administrative, clerical and technical jobs went.

Chart two shows factory floor productivity – that is, measuring the output of operatives per hour. Unlike chart one it takes account of hours worked, and leaves non-operative staff out of the calculation. As can be seen, the trend here is still healthy, but it is in fact less steep than the trend shown in chart one. There has been a steady six per cent a year productivity gain spread over the past two years. This beats the long-term trend rate by three points a year – a useful gain, but not one that puts Britain quite in the Germany or Japan league.

EVEN THIS GAIN, however, is not quite what it seems. Roughly speaking, increases in factory-floor productivity can happen in two ways: either by workers performing identical tasks faster, or by workers performing different, more efficient tasks (using new machinery, or better-planned assembly lines, for example). In chart three I have separated these into 'elbow-grease' productivity, and 'technological' productivity.

An attempt over the past decade to calculate 'elbow grease' productivity has been made by two academics, one from Leicester Polytechnic, the other from Aston University. [1] They monitor the detailed working practices of 130,000 workers in 171 factories. When the output per hour of workers *doing identical tasks* changes, that is reflected in the 'elbow grease' index (or Percentage Utilisation of Labour, to give it its formal name). Any alteration in the task – whether brought about by new equipment, or new working practices using the same equipment – is assigned to the 'technological' productivity index.

As chart three shows, 'elbow grease' productivity fell during the early stages of the recession, and later recovered. This pattern is similar to past recessions, and is readily explained. When output is falling, some assembly line work tends to slow down ahead of redundancies and closures. When output stabilises and then starts to pick up, assembly line work tends to speed up, and take up the slack in the system.

When 'elbow grease' productivity is allowed for, 'technological' productivity – the top line in chart three – can be estimated. Here, as can be seen, there was a jump of 8 per cent between early 1980 and early 1981. Since then, however, 'technological' productivity on the factory floor has risen much less – by 2 per cent in a year, a rate which is actually slightly *below* the long-term trend.

Since, in the long run, it is only 'technological' productivity on the shop floor that can sustain a permanent rise in the productivity rate, this does not bode well for the future of Thatcherism. For the truth of the productivity 'miracle' of the past 18 months – as represented in chart one – is that it is largely explained by an increase in overtime working, a shake-out in non-manual labour, and a recovery to normal levels of 'elbow grease' productivity on the factory floor. The factors that Mrs Thatcher holds dear, like new working practices and investment in modern technology, ceased to play a significant role in spring 1981.

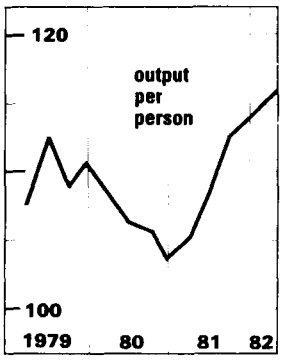
A yet more telling point may be made. In the past twelve years the most rapid short-term rises in technological productivity have occurred about 18 months after a demand-led investment boom. The productivity gains of 1980 are consistent with this. They came 18 months after the demand-led investment boom of 1978-79. And who was in power then?□

1. Further information can be obtained from Sydney Smith-Gavine, Leicester Polytechnic, Leicester LE1 9BH.

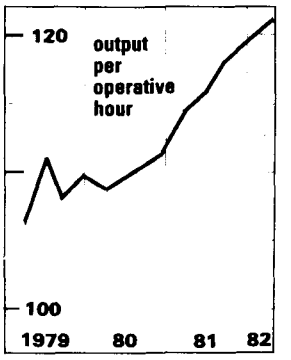
First, choose your productivity measure

Productivity in manufacturing (1975 = 100)

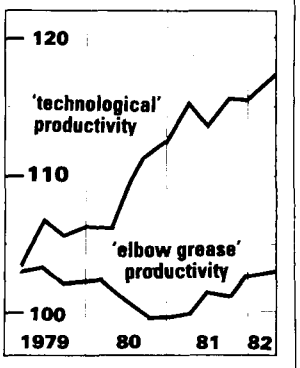
1: Overall



2: On the factory floor



3: Where it comes from



Sources: 1,2: CSO; DE Gazette; 3: Leicester Polytechnic calculations

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Requiem for Leo Abse

The Trestrail scandal will have been worth something, argues ANDREW LUMSDEN, if it brings us to the end of the Leo Abse era

I THINK Leo Abse a good man, the only MP who has ever made that specifically moral impression on me. The American system would have made more sense of him, and is certainly in need of such men: a man of Congress and not of the White House, a man with a passion for civil libertarian legislation and an indifference to executive power.

I was glad to be able, earlier this year, to thank him in person for his work before, during, and after the 1967 Sexual Offences Act. Many gay men aren't old enough to remember, most won't meet him anyway. I didn't say much. His room in the original Scotland Yard building isn't conducive, knowing the purges of homosexuals that were launched from there, to effusive displays of gratitude.

So here it is more formally: to no other heterosexual public figure in this country do homosexuals owe a debt of thanks. No other heterosexual has worked so hard at the mucky politicking necessary to get bad law off our backs, no other heterosexual has run such risks on our behalf in his constituency (Pontypool), no other heterosexual in political life has so completely thought out his, or her, intellectual approach to gays.

Neither Livingstone, with his apparent belief that the women's movement has nothing to learn from gays, nor Benn, with his rhetorical obeisances to gay rights while cultivating a 'working class macho' image, have yet offered anything but an imperfect, and imperfectly studied, echo of stuff that 'out' gays have been saying and writing for over a decade. They are not in Abse's league.

I praise Abse – of course – in the hopes of burying him. It is a marvellous thing to see a man in public life *think* about homosexuals, with fully as much attentiveness as others devote to, say, trades union rights, or immigration law, but we need now to draw a line between Abse's brave but misguided analysis and politics fit for the '80s. We need an end to patronage, to the 'charitable' attitude.

I don't want to waste scarce space – the first space I can remember the *New Statesman* allowing to a homosexual on homosexuality, though I may be wrong – on the detail of Abse's views, but in brisk summary he has thought about us and fought for us like, say, Casement thinking about and fighting for the brutalised Congo of the Belgian empire. He has fought for us as maimed and crippled people.

'We had hoped,' he is quoted as saying in reference to the Commander Trestrail resignation (*Mail on Sunday*, 25 July) 'that homosexuals would integrate themselves in the fabric of society'. He is little concerned with lesbians, beyond believing that it would be better if AID were not available to them, but has focused his exceptional degree of attention on male gays: our rights, but also our deficiences.

We are not strangers. We are not 'them'. We are non-heterosexual just as a Jamaican in the Gate is a non-white and as a woman, in another branch of political enquiry, is a non-man. We (lesbians and gay men) are different from the fantasised norm of the media and the legislature, the white male heterosexual norm, but like Jamaicans and women we couldn't be more integrated into society if we tried. We exist, and therefore we are integrated.

The boot is on the other foot. *We're* here, but we aren't integrated into the political thinking of those who presume to count themselves our friends in public life. We remain people whom men and women of goodwill on the Left (and the Right, and in the Liberal Party and in the SDP) don't wish to see harmed, but who are not worth a mature political analysis. Women as a sex have been here before us, and at present it is our turn to say that we are not children (if I can beg the question of what children are).

In law, we are handled as children, as women were before us (and in some respects still are). We are forbidden this, and we are forbidden that (I trust *New Statesmen* readers need no list of the incredible variety of restrictions on what we may do, and where we may do it, none of them applied to heterosexuals). And, as women once were and to an offensive degree still are, we are spoken *for*. We are enquired into, and written about, as if by anthropologists discussing a tribe whose language no-one understands.

Thus Neil Kinnock, who I hope is in shock about the reaction to his proposals, temporarily persuaded the Labour NEC on 6 June that if Labour gets into office there

Andrew Lumsden (right): praising Leo Abse (left) in the hope of burying him

Camera Press

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should be a Select Committee on the gay male age of consent (21). The Methodists in Conference in June studied 'proposals' about homosexuality for the third year running. Thatcher this May (Statement following the Diplock enquiry) used the highest executive office in the land to make comments about homosexuals, and issue instructions about us, which should be actionable before a Supreme Court or under any acceptable written Constitution.

MANY gays think that Conservatism, with its hype about the freedom of the individual from interference by the centralised State, offers the best hope of a soundly-based and politically mature approach to the ending of institutionalised homophobia. Others look to the SDP, which betrayed them at this year's Constitutional convention in London. Others to the Liberals, and so far with better results than from any other Party. In Llandudno last year, Liberals in Conference voted a motion *welcoming* the contribution made by gays to British society.

And yet others to the women's movement, which lesbians find as corrupt in its obeisance to the heterosexual norms as they find gay men in our obeisance to male norms. And others, if I may come home as far as this paper is concerned, to Labour or left of Labour. Among them, the gays who met last weekend in Nottingham for the national conference of the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights, where the deficiencies of *Labour's Programme 1982* were top of the agenda.

Not one of the following sections of the *Programme* made any reference whatever to the gross statutory and customary discrimination against gays: Equality, Employment, Education, Oppression of Women, or Treatment of Minorities by the Press. All the sections made either heartfelt or token reference to women in general and to ethnic minorities. This is the shabby document which is supposed to go before Conference this autumn as Labour's notion of an attack on social injustice in modern Britain.

I would like to put a question, and offer the beginnings of a primer. The question is this. What sort of Socialist theory is it that is so inattentive to individuals who are at the forefront of battle against every form of authoritarianism: Churches, States, police, unions (eg the Seamen's), the legislature, and the judiciary? Whose means of expression are so assaulted (*Gay News* now banned in Ireland, Body Politic placed in double-jeopardy in Toronto – which is illegal under English law – *Gay Community News* burnt to the ground in Boston, all this year).

And the beginning of a primer on our political representation in Westminster or anywhere else. Article I: The homosexual is the natural equal of any other citizen. *Any* qualification of this is totalitarian. Article 2: No legislation without representation. Policies, whether Labour's or anyone else's, are not to be decided without open hearings soliciting the views of gays in or, if need be, out of the Party. □

Andrew Lumsden is the editor of Gay News

ECONOMICS

Freeze time

PAUL ORMEROD on Mitterrand

AN AWFUL SENSE of déjà vu creeps over the British observer contemplating events in France today. An action replay of Britain 1966 seems to be unfolding. A left-of-centre Government, elected with a substantial majority after many years in opposition, takes office on a radical platform. Within months, plans to expand the economy are cut back; a wage-price freeze is introduced in response to rising inflation; the currency comes under attack and is eventually devalued. The parallels between Wilson 1966 and Mitterrand 1982 are indeed striking.

The initial French dash for growth and full employment has faltered. Industrial production actually fell in the first quarter of this year. Although the latest forecasts suggest growth of just over 2 per cent in both 1982 and 1983 (much better than Britain under Thatcher), is it enough? Despite a deceleration in recent months, unemployment has continued to rise, reaching a British equivalent of 2 million in April this year. A 2 per cent rate of growth will not be enough to prevent further rises.

Inflation has accelerated under Mitterrand, despite a partial freeze last autumn on certain food and service prices and the fall in world oil and commodity prices. The main reason has been the increase in wages – hourly earnings rose by 18 per cent between the first quarters of 1981 and 1982. A key element in this rise has been the government's legislation: a cut in working hours, holidays lengthened and social security contributions increased. Shorter hours and longer holidays are desirable, but they have a cost. Against this background, the Cabinet brought in the four-month price and wage freeze at the end of June.

In addition to the wage-price freeze, the Government has tightened its fiscal policy. The budget deficit is planned to fall from 3 per cent of national output to 2-2½ per cent in the years ahead – figures which would not look out of place in a Thatcherite Medium Term Financial Strategy.

WHAT ARE THE lessons for the Labour Party from the French experiment? The most obvious is the need actually to win elections. The hard-line ideology of the French Communist Party was out of tune with its traditional working class support. The radical but realistic platform of the French Socialist Party was not. The ultra-left critique of Labour's economic strategy argues that 'revisionist' policies of economic expansion are doomed to failure in a hostile world environment. Only full-blooded socialism now (or, even better, yesterday) can solve the problem.

Stripped of the rhetoric, a serious point is being made here. But it is wrong. Despite the difficulties which France faces, the economy is much stronger now than it would be under a Reagan/Thatcher style administration. And the prospects for real output and employment, whilst not perfect, are distinctly better than in Britain.

France does show clearly the difficulties which a moderately large economy faces in attempting to sustain employment and keep inflation reasonably under control. For the attitude of the governments of the world's major economies – America, West Germany and Japan – is in varying degrees unsympathetic to the French experiment.

In such a world, it is vital that Labour should not promise too much. This is the central lesson. A reduction of unemployment below one million in the lifetime of one parliament is too optimistic a target. It might be achieved with a whole series of lucky breaks. But it is out of reach as the central target of any realistic plan. Apart from the problems of electoral credibility, adoption of such a target would sow fruitful seeds for the next 'Great Betrayal Myth.' Once again, Labour's representatives in office would be accused before the People's Tribunal of having 'sold out' on Conference decisions.

Secondly, it is a mistake to defend an overvalued exchange rate. During the winter of 1981/82, French expansion was checked both by a loss of trade competitiveness and consequent import penetration and by the high interest rates necessary to defend the franc. Labour's leaders have more experience than others of this. The signs are that Peter Shore in particular does not intend to repeat those mistakes.

Despite a move towards austerity, the French Socialists have persisted with plans for a massive investment programme to restructure and modernise French industry, using the nationalised sector as a base. It is clearly recognised, however, as aiming at long-term benefit, and not a quick panacea for short-term problems via planning agreements plus workers' control. This is in marked contrast to the record of the last Labour government when the first victim of cuts was capital spending. This clearly means that less is available now for services which are needed now, but the long-term benefits should be substantial.

The preservation of the capital investment plans and the social programme of the government (including the introduction of a wealth tax) mean that the crisis package of a wage and price freeze does stand a chance of *permanently* reducing inflation. Certainly the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris believes there will be no opening of the floodgates at the end of the freeze: its forecast is for inflation to fall from over 15 per cent at the end of 1981 to 12½ per cent at the end of this year. The successful operation of an incomes policy to control inflation – the need for which is transparent despite the Labour Party's ostrich-like views on the matter – crucially depends upon the broader context in which the policy is introduced. If the government is seen to be working towards the preservation and creation of employment, and the implementation of socially just policies, most trade unionists are willing to accept restraint on incomes. Wage-led inflation has been Mitterrand's biggest problem. Will Labour learn the lessons in time? □

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IRELAND

Babies and bishops

Charles Haughey's support for a referendum on abortion is creating unpleasant tensions in Ireland. MARY HOLLAND reports from Dublin

THE IRISH PREMIER, Charles Haughey, is now set on a collision course with the Protestant Churches over his pledge to hold a referendum to decide whether an amendment 'guaranteeing the right to life of the foetus from the moment of conception' should be written into the Constitution. Abortion is already illegal in Ireland but this new amendment, if approved, would mean that the law could only be changed by holding another constitutional referendum.

All the major Protestant Churches have expressed their public opposition to the referendum and have appealed to Mr Haughey to call it off. They are concerned that the amendment seeks to enshrine, very precisely, the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church on the issue. At the moment, Irish Catholic doctors who follow their bishops' instructions are permitted to terminate pregnancies in two instances – cancer of the womb and ectoptic pregnancy. According to those who advocate the constitutional amendment these exceptions to the general prohibition would continue. The Protestant churches have been careful to emphasise that they are opposed to abortion but believe that there are additional circumstances when it may be justified.

Faced with the prospect of a divisive campaign, there have been increasingly vocal demands for the referendum to be called off, or at least referred to an All Party Committee of Inquiry, which would come to the same thing. Earlier this month, however, while campaigning in the Galway East by-election, Mr Haughey met a delegation from the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child and renewed his commitment to holding the referendum before the end of this year.

The unanimous opposition of the Protestant Churches has taken most people in Ireland by surprise. Protestants form less than five per cent of the population in the Republic and their collective instinct, particularly since the start of the present troubles in the North, has been to keep a low profile on issues where their beliefs differ from those of their Catholic fellow-countrymen, such as contraception and divorce. In recent months Mr Haughey, with a firm eye on Northern opinion, has been to considerable lengths to court the Protestant minority in the South. He has spoken and written of the Anglo-Irish tradition which produced such national leaders as Henry Grattan and Parnell, and has urged Protestants to play a full part in the affairs of the nation. The opposition leader Garret Fitzgerald has taken an even more positive line in emphasising the need to create a pluralist society in Ireland in which people of all creeds and none can be accommodated.

Now both men find themselves in the uncomfortable position that Irish Protestants have taken them at their word. On this issue at least, they have made their views unequivocally clear. Even worse, opposition to the referendum is now being voiced in the North by exactly the liberal Protestants that any Irish government must attempt to win over if they seriously aspire to an Ireland united by consent. They include church leaders, trade unionists, academics. When the Irish Congress of Trades Unions held its annual conference in Belfast recently a majority of the delegates, from North and South, signed a petition asking for the referendum to be called off.

So far the Catholic hierarchy has been discreet on the issue. Speaking as a body the bishops have reaffirmed their total opposition to abortion but have said they want to see the final text of the amendment before commenting on it. Already, though, there are signs that if the referendum does go ahead the campaign itself is likely to get quite rough. In these circumstances it might prove extremely difficult for the Protestant Churches to hold their nerve in opposing the amendment. Catherine McGuinness, a leading member of the Church of Ireland and a respected civil liberties lawyer, spoke on the subject of the amendment at a recent ecumenical conference. She stressed her Church's opposition to abortion but said she thought it should be recognised that it was part of Protestant mythology that a Catholic doctor was bound to save the life of a child even if this meant endangering the life of a mother in childbirth, and that for this reason many Protestant women still entertained fears about going to Catholic hospitals when they were pregnant. For this she has been subjected not only to the usual barrage of abusive phone calls and letters but, more worryingly, has been very strongly criticised by the Catholic Auxiliary Bishop of Dublin.

To judge by the growing support for the Anti Amendment Campaign and from editorials and letters in the national newspapers, a great many people now believe that the referendum could turn out to be the most divisive political issue in the Irish Republic for many years.

From Mr Haughey's point of view there is one major advantage to be gained from it – apart from impressing the committed Catholic voter – and that is the embarrassment it will cause to Garret Fitzgerald. The Fine Gael leader has staked his per-

Anti-abortion demonstrators of Ireland rail against the abortion mills of England.

Derek Spiers/IFL

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sonal political reputation on his commitment to creating a pluralist society acceptable to Northern Protestants, which means curbing the political influence of the Catholic Church. In these circumstances it is difficult to see how he can continue to support a constitutional amendment which Protestant Church leaders have described as sectarian. His Fine Gael party is divided on the issue, with the liberal wing opposing the referendum and the more traditionally Catholic right saying that it must go ahead. Mr Haughey hopes that if he plays his cards right the referendum could cause a major split in Fine Gael. That is an opportunity beside which the opposition of the Protestant churches and the long-term effects on relations between the North and South of Ireland pale into insignificance. □

PLANNING

Sold down the river

Property developers are wrecking London's South Bank. Michael Heseltine is helping them. FRANCIS WHEEN reports

TWO YEARS AGO Michael Heseltine, the environment secretary, won almost universal applause when he cancelled the Green Giant, a 500-foot tower of glass and aluminium which was to have been built on the south bank of the Thames by Vauxhall Bridge. It seemed that at last a halt had been called to the proliferation of huge buildings which had been defacing London's river for the previous two decades.

Last week, with rather less publicity, Michael Heseltine managed to prevent a parliamentary rebellion against the latest scheme for the Green Giant site – a series of zig-zagging slabs, 300 feet high, made out of concrete and glass. In order to force the plan through, Heseltine by-passed normal planning requirements. The developers of the site, a collection of international financiers and property men, now stand to make a substantial profit.

The project managers are a firm called Arunbridge Ltd whose chairman, Ronnie Lyon, has made a Lazarus-like recovery in recent years. In 1974 his property company, Lyon Group, crashed and Lyon himself faced bankruptcy since he had given £52 million-worth of personal financial guarantees. In the event his backers did not press him into bankruptcy, but it was a narrow escape.

The finance for Lyon's development at Vauxhall is mostly Arab money from the Artoc Bank, based in the Bahamas. Following the cancellation of the Green Giant, Lyon suggested to Heseltine last summer that an architectural competition should be held to choose a design for the site. Heseltine, who has often expressed his support for such competitions, was delighted with the idea. He said that if Arunbridge's competition yielded 'a scheme of proven merit' he would lay a Special Development Order (SDO) before Parliament. The Order would rid Arunbridge of the need to have its plan considered by the local planning authorities, which are hostile to speculative office developments in London. As Heseltine said, the Order, avoiding usual planning procedure, would 'lead to a greater certainty for the developer'.

Heseltine also declared, rather less convincingly, that the use of an SDO 'would encourage a wider public debate about a range of choices and solutions for a particular site'. Since the effect of a Special Development Order is to do away with all public consultation and inquiry, it is hard to see how Heseltine expected this 'wider public debate' to take place.

The competition was carried out at great speed. Entrants had just six weeks to produce designs for a 13-acre site encompassing 1.15 million square feet of offices, 211 luxury flats and 40,000 square feet of shops. Nevertheless, 128 architects submitted designs which were then assessed by the three-man panel of judges: Victor Henty, the chief architect to Arunbridge, the developers; Sir Hubert Bennett, a supporter of large developments during his 15-year spell as chief architect to the GLC, and a former executive director of the English Property Corporation; and Richard MacCormac, a young architect who was apparently less enthusiastic than his fellow judges about the zig-zag design which finally won.

The judges produced a short-list of eight entries, which were briefly put on public display earlier this year in a tent on the Vauxhall site. It is interesting to note that Arunbridge has refused to say which of the designs were favoured by the members of the public who attended the exhibition. The inescapable suspicion is that the public's verdict differed from that of the developers.

The panel members whittled the short-list of eight down to three. Then Arunbridge alone chose the winner. The successful design, by Andrew Sebire and Kit Allsopp, was much less imaginative than some of the others which had reached the last eight. Like other tall slab buildings it will suffer from 'rolling eddies', gusts of wind which bounce off the outside walls at knee level and cause embarrassment to women wearing skirts. It will also, according to its critics, make the Thames skyline even more hideous than it already is, and add to the stock of empty offices in London.

Perhaps it would be unreasonable to expect property developers to place much value on aesthetic considerations or public needs. The Secretary of State, however, is supposed to interest himself in such matters; and Michael Heseltine has often said that he is conscious of this responsibility. In a speech in 1980, for instance, he said:

> If we take the wrong decision now on how to use sites properly in the centre of our capital we shall not be easily forgotten, nor, dare I say, forgiven.

Quite so. In the case of the Vauxhall site his responsibility was all the greater, partly because of the sheer size of the project but more importantly because he had excluded local authorities and the public from having any influence and had ruled that he, and he alone, should decide whether the scheme should proceed.

In the event, however, his approval was almost a formality. Arunbridge chose the winning design on 12 May this year. Five days later, at an exhibition in London, Heseltine said that the competition had been a 'resounding success' and that he intended to lay a Special Development Order before Parliament at once.

The Order is a strange device. It is not debated unless one of its opponents introduces a 'prayer' asking for the Order to be annulled. Ted Graham, Labour MP for Edmonton, duly did so, and on 28 June the House of Commons was allowed just one hour's discussion of the subject before moving to a whipped vote which, predictably enough, resulted in a victory for the government. (Heseltine himself did not turn up for the debate.) Last week a similar prayer was introduced in the House of Lords. Although the whips were once again applied, there was a chance of a backbench revolt by some Tory peers. The chief whip, Lord Denham, therefore warned his troublesome colleagues that they would precipitate a constitutional crisis if they rejected Heseltine's Order since, unlike a Bill, it could not go back to the House of Commons. Denham suggested that the very existence of the Lords could be endangered. There was thus the odd spectacle of one Tory peer, Lord Duncan-Sandys, speaking against the Order and then voting in favour of it.

The use of an Order for a development such as that at Vauxhall is unprecedented. Until now Special Development Orders have been used to enable public interests to over-ride private interests in matters of national significance, such as the creation of new towns. Entirely reversed priorities have governed Michael Heseltine's Order for the Vauxhall site.

Heseltine's defence appears to be that the south bank of the Thames is already a mess and there is no point in trying to improve it. 'The pass is long since sold,' he said two months ago. 'The grand design is now prevented by soulless post-war development. For the visionaries it is too late. I would have been one of them . . .' Since he has himself speculated on how future generations will judge his efforts, perhaps he could affix to the new Vauxhall building a small plaque: 'Michael Heseltine, Secretary of State for the Environment. *Si monumentum requiris, circumspice.*' □

SOMETHING YOU OUGHT TO KNOW ABOUT

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More haste, worse programmes

Cable TV could bring benefits to the many or profits to the few – or neither. BOB WOFFINDEN examines the harsh decisions facing the Government.

WE CAN FORGIVE Lord Hunt if he perspires more than usually through the summer months. He is expected to complete an inquiry, with two colleagues and at break-neck speed, into cable TV – determining by September the implications for broadcasting standards and how far (if at all) the new system should be regulated.

The Hunt Committee was set up as a hurried response to the report published last March by the Cabinet Office's Information Technology Advisory Panel (ITAP). This report argued for a massive and urgent expansion of cable TV, to bring up to 30 television channels into half the households in the UK by 1986: a mind-boggling prospect, and one that surely merits more than the brief investigation commissioned by the Home Office.

Last week we considered the question of who should lay the cables – and argued for a publicly-owned, national network of optical fibre cables, installed by British Telecom. The alternative would be a carve-up of some sort between private companies. The ITAP report strongly favoured the latter, and suggested they should start digging up the pavements almost immediately, to put down a more old-fashioned type of copper cable that is more readily and cheaply available. But whatever happens, there remains the vital questions of quality and control.

Far more people already receive television pictures by cable than is generally appreciated: the total is more than 2.5 million, or 14 per cent of all UK households. The system was pioneered in 1951 by Broadcast Relay, predecessor of Rediffusion (which is now the largest company in the field). But air transmission has been predominant until now. Airwave frequencies are scarce and subject to international agreement, which has made it imperative for the Home Office to control them. In so doing, it controls broadcasting. If television were to be provided largely by cable, the Home Office would lose its chief reason for exercising control; it would either have to abandon its supervision, or it would have to establish different reasons for continuing to do so.

It is because past governments have been loath to relinquish control that they have declined to contemplate developments in cable TV. (Faced with rapid technological change, however, the Home Office has felt it necessary to make a gesture – with a few rather desultory cable TV experiments, which seem to have been designed as delaying measures.)

Now the ITAP report has enabled the visionaries at the Department of Industry – and in particular Kenneth Baker, Minister of State – to seize the initiative from the traditionalists at the Home Office, by putting the case for increased employment prospects and export opportunities. The report also tries to pre-empt questions of regulation by arguing that private enterprise funding would be forthcoming only if the government lifted all existing constraints in the field.

In many ways, de-regulation of broadcasting is an intoxicating prospect. The BBC and ITV networks cannot possibly satisfy all the public's needs; their narrow field of vision and 'consensus' standpoint have artifically exaggerated the homogeneity of our society. In theory, cable TV could – at a stroke – sweep away the accumulated shibboleths to which British broadcasting is heir, and provide opportunities for access and community television which have long been cherished by advocates of press and broadcasting freedom.

Anthony Jay, a member of the 1977 Annan committee and the creator of *Yes, Minister*, is a fervent de-regulator: 'It will be iniquitous if we allow vested interests to bounce the government into putting all kinds of restrictions and regulations upon an area which has vast growth potential and which could lead to great enrichment of all our lives.' He and others protest that cable TV companies should be no more closely monitored than publishing houses, and should be subject to the same legislation (on libel, treason, obscenity, etc.)

Of course, the companies have their own reasons for wishing to operate without constraints. For example, they are at present obliged to carry all BBC and ITV programmes. Over 80 per cent of all cable presently laid can carry only four channels – and thus, with the arrival of Channel 4 in November, will have no spare capacity. Since most companies want to make use of existing cables (as well as laying new ones with more channels), waiving that obligation would allow them to pipe through their own programmes, albeit at the espense of depriving cable-only viewers of one or two of the national channels.

BUT WHAT would it really be like if the government gave cable TV companies the green light? Rediffusion, Visionhire and others would lay cables under major cities, they would not find it economically viable to cable rural areas. Thus, some but not all homes would be connected to a network – for which the company would provide the programmes, either by making them itself or by leasing out channels to other programme makers. The consumer would have to pay for these through a regular subscription account; or by paying through a metering system, to view individual programmes; or channels would be self-financing, through advertising.

Without some central system of regulation, whoever laid the cable in a neighbourhood could enjoy a local monopoly over programmes. (This is discounting the bizarre possibility of several competing companies digging up the same pavements, each offering up to 30 channels.) The variety of programmes on offer would be determined by hard commercial considerations. In effect, regulation would be passed from the Home Office to a monopolistic cable company.

It is most unlikely that cable operators would, of their own volition, supply a satis-

Rediffusion's Richard Dennis: Cable TV 'has nothing to do with public service'

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factory range of local community and access programmes – because these wouldn't be sufficiently profitable. Richard Dennis, a director of Rediffusion, confirms this view. Cable TV, he says, 'has nothing at all to do with public service'.

Nor, apparently, has it anything to do with *diversity* in broadcasting. One cable TV executive recently declared: 'Of course, we're in favour of total de-regulation. Anyone will be allowed to run a channel. Mind you – we wouldn't let the weirdos in'. So much for the hope that de-regulated cable TV might help to liberate the means of communication.

So what sort of programming can we expect from cable companies if they are not controlled? It is worth recalling what happened to Rediffusion's first formal entry into UK programming: from 1955-67 its subsidiary, Rediffusion Television, supplied the weekly ITV programmes in the London area, but the Independent Television Authority (as it then was) declined to renew its contract because of what Stuart Hood has described as 'the appallingly low level of the programmes'.[1]

Perhaps it is unfair to assess a company's future on the basis of its ignominious past. If the BBC is to be believed, the cable companies threaten to cream off the most popular programmes, especially the major film and sporting events. The cable companies deny this. 'We have already given an undertaking to the Home Office that we won't' says Richard Dennis. 'It would be against our own interests, since it would create hostility towards cable.' Cynics might doubt that they will maintain their resolve, but the BBC's fears are nevertheless exaggerated. Having acquired for television two of the loftiest pinnacles of cinema success, *Gone with the Wind* and *The Sound of Music,* the Beeb can hardly claim impotence in the open market.

IT IS MORE LIKELY that the BBC and ITV will hold on to the biggest attractions, leaving cable TV to serve up a steady diet of second-division sport (speedway, perhaps, and dog racing) along with cheap, popular entertainment, including soft porn. Cable operations will generally have smaller audiences than the national, air-transmitted networks, and they will be far too dependent on maximising ratings for commercial security to risk much innovation or to cater for minority interests. (The only exception may be in areas such as Brixton or Southall where a large but localised population shares minority interests.) At the same time, they will be competing for viewers with the BBC and ITV – and the effect will be to erode standards all round. The ITV companies will need to retain their advertisers and the BBC will need to keep justifying its license fee. In short, it is not possible to expect standards to be observed by some, but not all, of the competing concerns. Everyone will eventually have to dance to the same tune. The US experience has shown that as television expands in quantity, so it contracts in quality and range.

Therefore we need at least some minimal safeguards. But there is a great deal of controversy, even among advocates of regulation, about what sort of controls and standards should be imposed, and by whom. The Glasgow Media Group has argued persuasively that the BBC's 'impartiality' reflects the prejudices of the white, male middle-class. Openness, diversity and accountability are more to the point – and the technology of cable TV could well encourage all three, if these were the recognised objectives of any future regulations.

Certainly, it will be important to avoid a concentration of programme-making in a few hands. Companies who supply and instal the cables should not also have control over programming. Rediffusion's Richard Dennis has declared himself 'totally hostile' to such a suggestion. Others, including Anthony Smith, Director of the British Film Institute, reject ITAP's suggestion that constraints necessarily stifle business incentives. As Smith points out, if a commercial enterprise can be turned into a non-commercial one by introducing a minimum level of national-interest programming, then there is more likely to be something wrong with the enterprise than with the programming.

WHAT MIGHT BE wrong is that cable TV is not such an instantly glittering prospect as it is cracked up to be. After all, it was assumed until very recently that domestic entertainment via cable TV would develop as a by-product of high-tech business communication, not vice versa. It seems that the business world has been unable to afford sufficient investment to do it that way round, and this may have helped inspire ITAP – with its strong connections with the industry – to suggest putting entertainment in the vanguard instead. However, the commercial viability of the idea remains doubtful.

The boom in video cassette recorders may be changing the habits of UK television viewers, but it is not necessarily splintering the audience. On the contrary, it could actually buttress the appeal of the networks and thus make it more difficult for cable TV to take off.

By the time cable TV arrives, the networks will be offering novelties of their own: Channel 4, breakfast television and the BBC's two satellite channels. Satellite transmission could, in any case, be far more significant than cable. Here, too, the technological developments are staggering. For example: the signal from each satellite that arrives on earth (known as a 'footprint') has a space around its perimeter which can accommodate a number of different audio signals. It is already technically possible to beam a programme throughout Europe which is received by each country in its own language.

In the US, cable TV has become a travesty of its original promoters' claims. One journalist, Gersh Morningstar, has described it as a 'rapidly decaying monument to greed, flimflam and shared ignorance'. In Britain, too, it may be doomed to a bleak future, with too many channels in search of too few viewers. The danger is that regulations may be imposed initially but later abandoned, in desperation, as the business fails. □

[1] On Television (Pluto Press, 1980)

STUDENTS

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NEW STATESMAN

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Revenge of the cobra

DAVID CAUTE on the feud between Mugabe and Nkomo

DURING ZIMBABWE'S war of liberation many whites predicted – and took an embittered pleasure in predicting – that a victory for the 'terrorist' forces of the Patriotic Front would merely precipitate factional fighting and tribally based civil war. Whites of this ilk were delighted to believe that they alone could reconcile Shonas and Ndebeles within a single nation – called Rhodesia.

No sooner had the Lancaster House Agreement been signed in December 1979 than Mugabe's ZANU rejected Nkomo's invitation to fight the elections on a common ticket. The upshot, confirmed by subsequent local elections, cruelly demonstrated the deep tribal split; Nkomo's PF took sixteen out of seventeen seats in Matabeleland, but only four elsewhere.

Confronted by this evidence of ancient tribal rivalry, by the Ndebele's fear of Shona domination, the leaders of Zimbabwe have on the whole displayed a high level of restraint, although Mugabe's personal example has not invariably been imitated by his more intemperate colleagues like Enos Nkala and Edgar Tekere. The heroic task of integrating some 50,000 former ZANLA and ZIPRA guerrillas in mixed battalions has been accomplished both urgently and wisely. Even so, a condition of near-anarchy now prevails in areas of Matabeleland.

In the minds of Mugabe's ministers the spectre haunting the feast of national unity is Joshua Nkomo. Angrily dismissed from the Government in February following the discovery of large arms caches on farm estates with which he was closely associated – he pleaded absolute innocence – Nkomo is viewed as the Old Pretender, the king across the water sullenly plotting – with the Russians? or the South Africans? or Lonrho? – to de-stabilise the country in ruthless pursuit of the throne he regards as his own.

NKOMO is a big man, massive in girth, with a small head and a high voice: the tenor turns to falsetto when he is angry. He is often angry. But the greeting is warm, genial: as Conor Cruise O'Brien once noted, Nkomo resembles Kipling's dual concept of Baloo the bear, a mellow, avuncular fellow who might just, in some unfortunate conjuncture, rip off half your face. Now 64 years old, he refers disparagingly to Mugabe (55) as 'that power-hungry young man' bent on concocting plots to speed his dream of a one-party state. Mugabe reciprocates by calling Nkomo a cobra and alleging that ZAPU had plotted all along to keep its crack units in reserve for the ultimate *coup d'état*. Nkomo dismisses the charge with contempt. A sad, pained indignation supplants the anger: he had so much wanted to collaborate with 'Robert' in the service of a united Zimbabwe. But 'Robert' wasn't having it. The truth of the matter is that Mugabe, whose social policies are both more radical and plausible than Nkomo's, had made strenuous efforts to accomodate his old rival within a national coalition.

Mugabe's men hold Nkomo personally, and exclusively, responsible not only for ZAPU's stubborn rejection of a one-party state but also for the equally stubborn separatism of the Ndebeles. It's a dubious thesis. Even in 1979, when Nkomo remained in exile, a Ndebele-based party did remarkably well at the polls. Although Mugabe's ZANLA units had by the end of the war infiltrated the Filabusi district, Essexvale, Gwanda, Beitbridge and Plumtree, the peasants of these areas continued to regard them as alien intruders, fiercely resenting the ZANLA slogan *'Pasi na Nkomo'* (down with Nkomo), clandestinely distributing the ZAPU election symbol representing a ZIPRA soldier carrying a baby, turning out 250,000-strong when Nkomo held his great rally at Njele mountain, and finally offering him an overwhelming vote of confidence at the polls. A year later it was the same story at the local government elections: Nkomo's party swept all 15 seats in Bulawayo by huge majorities.

Despite a common enemy and a common cause, years of rivalry separated the two guerrilla armies in the field.

At the height of the war, in May 1979, I interviewed ZIPRA combatants operating in the Shabani area. They expressed contempt for ZANLA's lack of military discipline. Local people told me that ZANLA units only 15 kilometres to the east referred to ZIPRA as *'machuwa-chuwa'*, a disparaging caricature of the 'chug chug chug' plod of a typical Ndebele patrol. Another common ZANLA slogan, which the peasants were wise to chant at *'pungwes'*, or village rallies, whatever their true sentiments, was *'Pasi ne vanema-tumba'* – meaning 'Down with big stomachs'. Guess who?

THESE bottled-up enmities finally found full dramatic expression during the great shoot-out in Bulawayo in February 1981. Almost 300 corpses, the majority wearing camouflage fatigues, were laid out in meat-transport refrigeration cars in the railway sidings. When faction fighting erupted in three battalions of the National Army in the wake of this blood-letting, a wider catastrophe was only narrowly averted. A year after Independence 4,000 ZIPRA men remained in defiant autonomy at the Gwai River camp, their fortress ringed by RPG 7 rocket launchers and anti-aircraft guns aimed skywards in anticipation of aerial attack. The Government was well aware that ZIPRA possessed heavy equipment, including armoured cars, which had been secretly imported from Zambia since the cease-fire; although some of it was eventually surrendered, it was a fair surmise that a good deal more remained cached against a rainy day.

The discovery of these caches in February resulted in Nkomo's dismissal from

Joshua Nkomo: 'Down with big stomachs' say the peasants

Camera Press

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the Government. Immediately all the ancient enmities surfaced. I talked to 'Charles Ncube', a former ZIPRA colonel now serving as a captain in the National Army. Downing beer after beer, he spoke with mounting anguish of the arrest of ZIPRA's two most senior commanders. Lt. General Lookout Masuku, a Soviet-trained war hero and now second-in-command of the National Army, was spirited into prison by the Central Intelligence Organisation immediately after his return from an official trip abroad. Charles Ncube spat on the lawn: 'They treat us like traitors. No one feels safe now. I speak Shona to former ZANLA colleagues but I never confide my private thoughts to them. Aaah . . . Now we are sent this questionnaire asking for details of our fighting record during the struggle.' He laughed sadly and cracked another beer. 'Now why? To award us war medals? Or to mark the ZIPRA men down?'

Ndebeles have recently experienced a sense of alienation exceeding that of the whites who daily suffer governmental rebukes for clinging to their privileges and refusing to 'reconcile'. On 27 March a *Herald* editorial referred, as if it were a proven fact, to 'ZAPU's efforts to overthrow the Government by force,' adding: 'What really surprises us is that Dr Nkomo has not been arrested . . .'

I VISITED a group of men and women gallantly attempting to establish a farming cooperative outside Harare. Their sincerity, dedication and, indeed, socialist idealism were beyond question, yet the curse of a ZIPRA past contaminated their venture and the Army moved in, prowling and sniffing for buried arms and odours of subversion, day after day, while these good people toiled to educate their young, sow maize and sweet potatoes, and raise chicks under batteries of light bulbs. The leader of the group shrugged sadly: 'Do we need this? Are we not all Zimbabweans?'

In the aftermath of Nkomo's humiliating dismissal it has become apparent that large numbers of former ZIPRA guerrillas have decamped from the Army, carrying their weapons into the bush and bringing parts of Matabeleland to a condition of acute lawlessness. Robberies and murders have now culminated in a calculated political act – the kidnapping of white tourists north of Bulawayo, with the threat to kill them unless the Government releases certain detainees. Following as it does an armed ttack by former ZIPRA men on Mugabe's official residence, and preceding only by hours the efficient destruction of grounded war planes at Thornhill air base, this challenge will inevitably exacerbate tension and tempt the Government to exercise emergency powers (inherited from the Smith regime) even more ruthlessly.

The Government's problem is compounded by the fact that it is exposed to a relentless de-stabilisation campaign by South Africa, which now commands the services of former members of the Rhodesian security forces hellbent on revenge. The temptation to assume collusion between these hostile forces must be acute: and what more tempting scapegoat than Nkomo himself? The cure could prove worse than the cold. □

MIDDLE EAST

Will Arabs cash their cheques?

Arab nations may impose sanctions against America in protest at the siege of Beirut. CLAUDIA WRIGHT reports

IN THE EVENT of an all-out Israeli attack on West Beirut, and if Yasser Arafat is killed, Palestinian commanders have been instructed to attack American installations, diplomatic and military personnel, and US companies operating in the area. In Washington, Administration officials dismiss this as an empty threat, confident that the Saudis, Kuwaitis, and the other Emirates will be able to keep control. A former US ambassador in the area, now a business consultant, isn't so sure. After a recent tour of Kuwait and the lower Gulf, he says he has never seen such anti-Americanism in a career of 30 years. If the Israelis attack Beirut, he says, the Gulf authorities will be unable to protect the visible symbols of American presence in the Arab world, and even before it comes to that, internal pressure may force the Saudis, Kuwaitis and others to impose their own sanctions on the Reagan Administration.

On 25 June, a Palestinian delegation met in Washington with the Saudi Ambassador, Sheikh Faisal Alhegelan. The ambassador was asked to relay a message to King Fahd – would Saudi Arabia consider measures to be taken against the United States? Withdrawal of short-term deposits in US banks and reduction in oil output and sales to the US were the main options mentioned. Alhegelan assured the group he had been active with American business leaders, urging them to intervene with the White House for steps to restrain Israel. The ambassador said he had spoken with George Shultz, who was then still working with Bechtel, with David Rockefeller of Chase Manhattan Bank, and with officials of several other corporations. Without revealing what they had said or expressing his own view, he promised to relay the Palestinian proposal to Fahd.

The next day, the Arab League convened an emergency meeting of foreign ministers in Tunis. Farouk Qaddumi, director of external relations for the PLO, asked the meeting to adopt a motion in favour of economic sanctions against the United States. He asked the Saudis to commit themselves. Prince Saud Al-Faisal, the Saudi foreign minister, responded by saying that economic sanctions would be ineffective and were out of the question.

Reagan Administration officials have repeatedly said there is no way the Arabs could harm either American capital markets or oil supplies. George Shultz told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that it wasn't in the Saudis' interest to pull investments out of the US. When Senator Charles Percy, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, suggested after a meeting with Prince Saud that Arab sanctions had to be taken more seriously, the Administration issued several disclaimers. Paul Volcker, chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, told a television interviewer that even if the Arabs withdrew their deposits, they would have to put them elsewhere; the international banking system would recycle the money back again.

WHAT HAS BEEN avoided in public discussion is the possibility that a carefully targeted Saudi-Arab attack, limited to a few vulnerable points in the economy, could produce a much larger political blow than the cost of the economic damage alone would indicate. Privately financial analysts and bank officials admit that if the Arab states were to choose one or two American banks, a large withdrawal of deposits could inflict serious damage.

The two most vulnerable targets at the moment are Chase Manhattan and Continental Illinois, two of the six largest US banks. These have just announced unprecedented second-quarter losses from the failure of a small New York brokerage house and the collapse of an Oklahoma bank. They are now more susceptible to pressure from large depositors. So are many of the large US banks, whose earnings have been falling this year. A carefully-timed withdrawal of Arab deposits could affect about $11 billion in deposits with banks in the US – and there are additional Middle Eastern deposits of at least $21 billion in US bank subsidiaries operating abroad. Most of these funds are held by just six banks, including Chase and Continental Illinois. Roughly half these deposits can be withdrawn at 30 days' noitice, or less. Three-quarters of the funds can be recalled in less than 90 days. The opportunity to make a dramatic, short-term impact – with relatively little economic loss to the Arab states – is there.

Moreover, traders say that if the Arab states sold off $10 to 20 billion in Treasury bills and bonds, they could force up interest rates. The immediate effect would be an inflationary pressure felt throughout the economy, and a politically damaging increase in the size of the Federal government's budget deficit. The projection for 1983 went up this week to about $140 billion, from $104 billion estimated by Congress earlier this year. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that an increase of a single percentage point in Treasury bill rates would add another $2 billion to the interest payable on the public debt in 1983, rising to $9 billion in 1985.

For the moment this isn't the kind of move the Arabs are contemplating. Last week an unidentified Arab state made a swap of short-term for long-term Treasury securities worth several hundred million dollars. This demonstrated exactly the confidence the White House says it can count on from its Arab friends. But the possibility of an equally large or larger disinvestment cannot be discounted if the situation around Beirut deteriorates.

IN THE international oil market, the first

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reaction to the war in Lebanon was a rise of 85 cents in the spot market price of Arab Light, the Saudi crude oil. Demand in Europe and the US continued to increase during the war, but prices stayed roughly the same. Assurances from the Saudis that there would be no production cut, and continued growth in the output of Iran and Libya have kept buyers confident and the market stable.

However, if an agreement between the three producers could be reached – or if Iraqi air attacks temporarily stopped Iranian shipments – a cut of at least 2 million barrels a day (which is generally estimated to be the size of the current surplus on the market) is possible. The US has been busy rebuilding depleted inventories for the coming winter and has lifted oil imports by two million barrels a day since the war began. While there is ample capacity to draw on if the surplus were removed, a production cut by the Arabs and Iran would mean increasing uncertainty and higher prices.

The major US oil companies, whose earnings have been slipping like the banks', would be only too happy to see prices go up, and this would also be in the self-interest of the oil producers. Even before the war began, American refiners had begun to raise their gasoline prices to improve their profits. The impact on the consumer price index was to push the annual rate upwards into the 12 per cent range. That level of inflation was very bad news for the White House, since dropping prices and diminished inflation have been the only tangible economic benefits of Reaganomics to show the electorate so far.

It is certain that the Arab 'oil weapon' cannot produce the price leaps and shortages that followed the embargo of the October 1973 war. However, in the precarious economic climate in which the White House is trying to plot its tactics for the Congressional election campaign, a relatively slight blow could hurt Mr Reagan in a politically persuasive way. □

ARMS RACE

No ban on bomb tests

PETER PRINGLE studies Reagan's fat-headed reasoning

RONALD REAGAN decided last week to reject 19 years of US and British efforts to negotiate a comprehensive test ban treaty because he had concluded that current measures of 'verification' were not good enough. This problem crops up whenever the two superpowers get together to talk about arms control: if there's a treaty to reduce nuclear weapons, or limit their numbers, or to ban testing them, how do we know the Russians won't cheat? The President said the Americans could not verify the existing 1974 Threshold Test Ban Treaty limiting underground tests to 150 kilotons (about ten times the size of the Hiroshima bomb); so, he argued, it was pointless to negotiate for a total test ban until verification could be improved.

What has suddenly gone wrong? Has the Administration discovered Soviet violations of the 1974 treaty? Have the Soviets been testing above the agreed limit of 150 and we can't tell by how much? Do we know something about our ability, or inability, to monitor the Soviet tests today that we didn't know when we signed the treaty in 1974? Is our verification hopelessly impaired because we lost an important listening post in Iran when the Shah fell?

Administration officials will only say there are 'uncertainties' in the way yields of Soviet tests are estimated and 'the United States cannot prove beyond any reasonable doubt that the Soviets have violated the threshold test ban'.

Requiring such a burden of proof suggests that verification is an exact science, yet the one thing we know is that, like any other intelligence gathering mission, it is a hotch-potch affair. Scientists calculate the size of a Soviet test from a number of different 'listening posts'. These include seismic 'black boxes', atmospheric tests of possible particles vented from the underground explosions, and satellite reconnaissance of the size of the 'sink hole' caused by the explosion. There is also a political ingredient, an allowance for an element of doubt about Soviet intentions and capacity to deceive. Some readings of past Soviet tests may appear to have been high, but in fact there has been a tendency for those monitoring them to say, 'well, we will give the Russians the benefit of the doubt this time; perhaps it was an error.'

Now the Reagan Administration apparently wants to change the rules, casting aside the political ingredient. We are left to guess the reason why. Some arms controllers harbour dark suspicions about the change. They say it's a symptom of the dominance of the hawks in the Administration who don't want arms control at any price and see the verification issue as a good way of delaying, or even scuppering, the talks in Geneva. Others go further. They say the Administration wants to break the 150 kiloton limit itself in tests of the new generation of American nuclear warheads, such as the Trident 2 and the MX. The Administration says this is ridiculous; it promises to continue to observe the threshold.

Whatever the reason, the Administration's attitude has disturbing echoes of past attempts to block progress on test ban treaties. When a ban was first seriously considered 24 years ago under the Eisenhower administration, opponents of the ban, such as Edward Teller, the father of the US H-bomb, used the verification issue as a way of delaying negotiations. Test ban opponents, led by Teller, suggested all kinds of bizarre ways the Russians could cheat.

One such was the 'big hole' theory, where the crafty Russians were credited with the possibility of digging a hole large enough to have a small explosion muffle a much bigger one so that, according to a 1959 report, 'a yield of 300 kilotons could be made to look seismically like a yield of 1 kiloton'. No-one at the time bothered to consider the ludicrous expense of digging such a large hole. Another deception suggested was exploding atomic devices behind the sun. The innate mistrust of the Russians by some scientists was summed up by Teller: 'In the contest between the bootlegger and the police, the bootlegger has a great advantage.'

To those, such as Teller, who worked in the atomic laboratories at Los Alamos and Livermore, there was also another reason for rejecting the test ban: their jobs depended on developing new weapons and testing them. That's just as true today.

When the Threshold Test Ban Treaty was signed the boffins divided on whether it was verifiable; the question was not so much, would the Russians cheat and make bigger bangs, but could the ones under 150 kilotons be detected and distinguished from recurring natural phenomena like earthquakes. Many establishment scientists believed the smaller explosions could be detected, down to about 10 kilotons. They also warned that the figure could vary by a factor of 30 according to the distance of the seismic data stations from the explosion and the rock-type of the test region.

Test detection has improved considerably during the last decade and it is now possible to distinguish all but the smallest tests from earthquakes. President Reagan's decision to set aside the talks on a comprehensive test ban is a political decision rather than a scientific one and does not bode well for nuclear arms control. □

ISRAEL

Jews and war

ELFI PALLIS looks at Jewish views on the invasion of Lebanon

BRITAIN'S 450,000-strong Jewish community has, for the past 34 years, been solidly behind Israel's policy towards the Palestinians. But the invasion of Lebanon is beginning to divide it. The Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Chief Rabbi were undoubtedly still speaking for the majority last week when they reiterated Jewish support for Israel on the twin grounds that the war had been a defensive measure and that civilian casualties have been vastly exaggerated by British correspondents.

As the war goes into its seventh week, however, there is growing dissent in the letters pages of the Jewish weeklies and in public statements. Pictures of Arab children hurt in the fighting have greatly distressed many Jews, who also fear for the safety of relatives serving in the Israeli army. Many share the Israeli peace movement's anger at being asked to accept ever-changing justifications for the invasion: what had started out as an act of retaliation for the attempted assassination of Israel's ambassador had become within days a campaign to create a 25 mile safety belt for Galilee and then an all-out war to destroy

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the PLO militarily in Beirut.

This change in Jewish attitudes was illustrated by the advertisement condemning the devastation of Lebanon in *The Guardian* on 8 July. It was signed by 120 Jewish academics, artists and ordinary community members, with no particular political affiliation. Although condemned as 'hysterical' by the *Jewish Chronicle*, the advertisers received some 200 letters of support within a couple of days, and only one letter of criticism.

The Board of Deputies, whose members are drawn from the ranks of community and religious organisations largely attended by the over 30s, is sticking to its guns nevertheless. When a group of Jewish dissidents tried to present a letter demanding an end to unqualified support for Israeli policies during the Board's meeting last Sunday, they got nowhere. The Board simply refused to accept their letter. □

AFRICA

Squabble over the Sahara

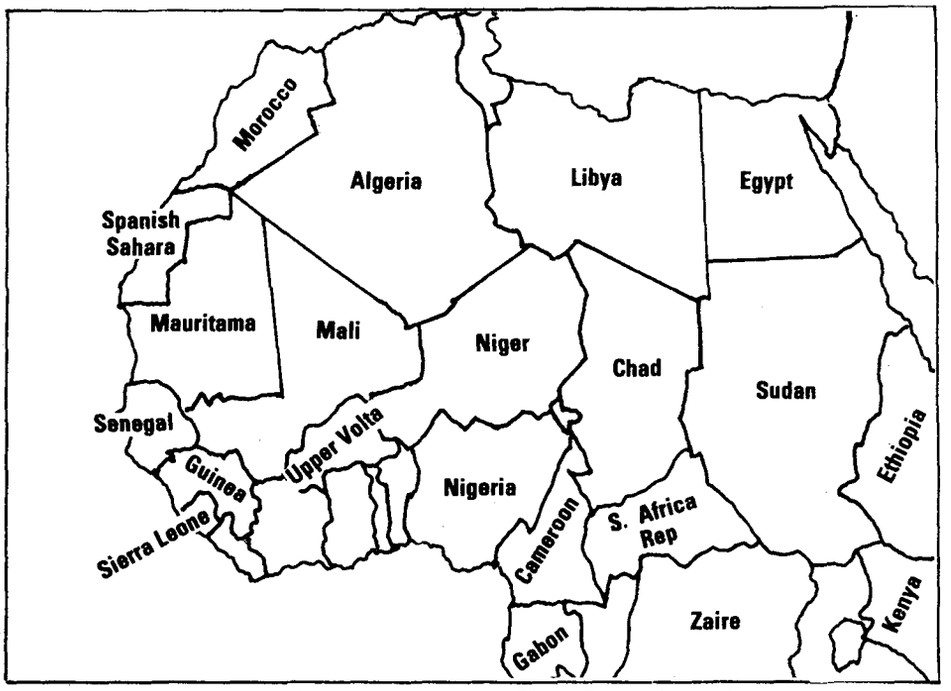
MARK DOYLE reports on an issue which seems likely to split the Organisation of African Unity

EARLY NEXT MONTH, the Heads of State of the Organisation of African Unity will meet for their annual Summit. The meeting could be a shambles, shattering the precarious unity of the OAU. It is the admission of the OAU's 51st state which is the immediate cause of the disunity – for the new member is the Saharwi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) representing the disputed territory south of Morocco which is claimed by King Hassan as part of 'Greater Morocco'.

By the middle of this week, the representatives of 37 African countries had arrived in Tripoli for a pre-Summit meeting. But if, in response to Colonel Qaddafy's invitation, the Saharwi representatives attend the Summit, nineteen Heads of State have threatened to walk out. The Summit will not then have a quorum.

As we went to press, rumours of deals to break the impasse were rife. Niger and Upper Volta, two of the original protesters at admission, were under strong pressure from Qaddafy's organisers to change their minds. Both countries need good relations with Libya. It was also mooted that the SADR representatives might sit at the preparatory meeting but not at the Heads of State Summit. But an SADR spokesperson told the *NS* this was not on: 'We have waited long enough', he said, 'we shall be there.'

Edem Kodjo, secretary general of the OAU, admitted the SADR as the 51st state at the meeting in Addis Ababa last Morocco, walked out.



The dispute over sovereignty goes back to 1975, when the Spanish colonisers of year. Twenty-six member countries had already given it diplomatic recognition, and since then newly socialist Mauritus has joined them. Kodjo's decision was therefore in line with Article 28 of the OAU's charter. But almost as soon as the SADR's representatives entered the conference hall, proudly dressed in the blue robes of the Saharwi, 19 countries, led by Western Sahara ceded the area to Morocco and Mauritania to administer. The local guerrilla units, called the Polisario, which had been fighting the Spanish, then turned against the Moroccans. (Mauritania pulled out of the conflict.)

The Polisario are backed by arms from Libya and Algeria. King Hassan used to be backed by the French. Now he is supplied principally by the United States. The line-up of those who support the SADR membership reflects such international allegiance and also highlights the OAU's obsession with border questions. Both can often be traced back to colonial and neo-colonial influences.

WHEN THE OAU was formed in 1963, marking the ending of direct colonial rule, it had to face an avalanche of claims and counterclaims to territory, airspace and ocean resources. Many of the historic African empires had a quite different shape from the states created by colonial rule. The OAU decided the colonial boundaries had to be respected, to avoid chaos. King Hassan broke the rules when, in 1975, he sent the Moroccan army south into the 'Spanish Sahara', claiming the region to be part of 'Greater Morocco'.

Support for King Hassan's position has been called reactionary by some European commentators. But political divisions do not fall as neatly as that. Sékou Touré, the revolutionary leader of Guinea on many national issues, has an affinity with King Hassan. Both are Muslims in the most conservative tradition. Broadly speaking, the more Muslim a country is, the more Saudi development cash is available; the more right-wing it is, the more US arms it can get.

Sierra Leone is another interesting case. Originally among the first to recognise the SADR, President Siaka Stevens appears to have changed his mind. His regime is shaky, in need of military and financial support. Sierra Leone recently joined the Islamic Conference, a conservative religio-economic grouping, along with Guinea and Saudi Arabia. It did so in an unashamed grab for more development cash. Inevitably, such a rapprochement with the reactionary Muslim world and western money has influenced Sierra Leone's position on the SADR membership.

Most of the countries which support the SADR have been dubbed 'progressive.' Most of them rely for financial or military backing on the Soviet Union or Cuba. But Guinea Bissau, which needed Soviet support in its war for independence against Portugal, now also needs friends in its fight for economic development. While the Soviet Union continues to provide military backing, it gives little development aid. Guinea Bissau recently joined the Gambia River project, a vast development scheme financed by Saudi and European cash and controlled from Dakar, capital of Senegal – which opposes recognition for the SADR. Once again, the scramble for development money may have overriden ideology.

There are a few exceptions to such dependence on aid donors and military backers. Nigeria, for instance, whose GNP is now larger than that of South Africa, is a rare state which can afford to be politically non-aligned.

Faced with such consequences of the pauperisation of Africa, the OAU looks as though it is in for a bad press at its next meeting. It would be naive to offer an apologia for the failings of those African leaders who preside over some of the most cynical, repressive and inegalitarian regimes in the world. But to expect a degree of ideological unity in a continent which has been balkanised by the successive claims of Islam, Christianity, capitalism and Soviet aid would be absurd. Africa has long had a role as a playground of international interests, and none of those interests plans to pull out now. □

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DIARY

Christopher Price

Now the end of term has finally arrived, I shall cease diarising for the grouse shooting season; it's a period which Ministers love because although problems don't go away, Parliament and that twice-weekly Prime Minister's question time do. The government can dominate the newspapers with quiet press conference tales of the Health Service wreckers and the Scargill's wreckers, all in the mould of the Ray Buckton railway wreckers. So here's my shortlist of real wreckers for the attention of Mrs Thatcher and her Ministers.

○

First the Metropolitan Police. It's now clear that Robert Mark never cut out the cancer of corruption, but I'm sorry it's been left to David Steel to send a delegation to Whitelaw to sort it all out. At the moment the Liberals are neurotic about keeping up with the Jenkinses and are using their list of twenty corrupt policemen for a little libertarian outflanking of the SDP Tendency. A task, then, for Mr Whitelaw – if he keeps his job; see if he can find out to whom the £300,000 insurance company reward for the 1980 Essex silver bullion robbery actually went and how much was laundered back to policemen; and if he can't find out the answer to his own satisfaction, perhaps he will come round to Labour's solution – complete re-organisation of the Met into smaller units, under democratic control. At the end of the day, when the rot becomes endemic, breaking up a bureaucracy is the only final way to cleanse it.

○

Which brings me to my next bunch of wreckers and candidates for reorganisation, the European Economic Community and its so-called Parliament – whose financial laundering activities have reached Met proportions. We had two ill-attended debates on the EEC last week but MPs are bored with the subject, partly because both major political parties are in a muddle. The Tories have lost, through the Falklands War, all the ground they had gained on the Community Budget and Labour's policy of complete withdrawal is coming under unexpected socialist fire from the *New Socialist* which has discovered some good in the place. When I had a year's sabbatical on the 'Parliament' five years ago, I felt rather like a young Met policeman. Men in uniform kept pushing envelopes stuffed with money at me for no apparent reason. (It later emerged they were 'expenses'.) I resigned as soon as I decently could and put George Cunningham in my place. Like the Met, Europe needs strict control by genuine democrats instead of phoney Strasbourg ones. The Danes do it rather well; so do the French, though not by democratic means; their Parliament is as phoney as Strasbourg's. But all of them, politicians and functionaries alike, have an instinctive understanding of where their national interest lies.

○

My third candidate for parliamentary control is the accountancy profession. So long as private accountants confined their activities to the private sector, giving clean bills of health to the Savundras and Slaters and Lakers of this world, right up to the point of bankruptcy, I never complained. It was a bit rough on the poor folk who lost their money but one could see the object of the exercise and the reason for the high fee. But Mrs Thatcher has begun to put private accountants into water boards and health authorities and taken power to put them into local councils on the pretence that they will help these bodies give 'value for money'. Now she's giving them an *entré* into central government itself – with nationalised industries soon to follow.

Tim Eggar, the ebullient young Tory MP for Enfield put it rather well the other day: 'This could be a bonanza' he said, 'there are tremendous opportunities for private firms'. Accountants are meant to be professionals – which these days is no guarantee against scandal; it was when that respected professional architect, John Poulson, bribed his way into the public sector and enjoyed a bonanza for himself and his friend Mr Maudling, that certain scandals occurred. Earlier this year, Ken Sharp, the Government chief accountant, had to tell the senior partners of the big thirteen – Price Waterhouse, Coopers and Lybrand, Arthur Andersen and the like – to stick to the professional rules and stop touting for Government business. Now Mrs Thatcher and her acolyte Mr Eggar are telling them to tout away, and enjoy the bonanza.

○

Such is the present orgy of privatisation, that before long the only public service jobs the Prime Minister would really wish us to be proud of are soldier, sailor, airman, policeman and spy. Especially the armed services. This is the key to her fury at Dr Runcie for using the Falklands service at St Paul's to shift her agenda from war to peace. Now I'm not against allowing her to sing 'Fight the Good Fight' from time to time. But someone should tell her that the Good Fight is against unemployment and poverty, not the Argies. In fact I'm rather pleased her mask has slipped for once and she has been snapped with her primitive emotions showing; it might mean we'll hear less from her about St Francis of Assisi at the next election.

○

The Alliance has the reputation, among some, for being a nice bunch of fellows, prone to do the decent thing. If they wish to keep it, they'll call off David Alton from his litigious pursuit of Mrs Pat Taylor, for a letter containing some remarks about his political ambition which she wrote to the papers during the Edgehill by-election three years ago. She was simply trying to save Paddington Comprehensive School in Liverpool, for which David Alton had other plans. She's now received a demand for £1,650 within ten days. It never seemed to me a particularly Liberal habit to bankrupt your political opponents through the courts. But perhaps Liverpool Liberals are different. □

ROGER WODDIS

The Military Tendency

'I was very shocked by the order of service. There were no martial hymns like Fight the Good Fight and Onward Christian Soldiers.' – Julian Amery, Tory MP.

Onward, Christian soldiers,
Uniforms galore,
Fond of peace and freedom,
Loving corpses more.
Christ the true Commander
Blew away the foe;
He who rules in heaven
Ordered them below.

Onward, Christian soldiers,
Celebrating war,
With a jingo Jesus
Giving them what-for.

Hopeless are the humble,
Mindless are the meek;
Only wets and Quakers
Turn the other cheek.
Christ in all his glory
Leads his macho squad;
Awesome in his armour
Goes our gungho God.

Onward, Christian soldiers;
Victory in war
Makes of grieving widows
People to ignore.

THIS ENGLAND

£3 book tokens for entries printed (on postcards, please).

☐ A wax image of Mr Benn on show in the 'London Dungeon' which houses an exhibition of torture and punishment through the ages – collected more than 25 per cent of the 2,000 votes cast by visitors to the show. *Daily Express* (Russell Holmes)

☐ Proposals to give free swimming lessons to school children in Solihull, Birmingham, until they can swim one length have been scrapped. Councillors feared some would deliberately avoid swimming a length to get in free. *Daily Telegraph* (W. Pugh)

☐ A Government minister was accused of being 'sexist' in the Commons yesterday as he faced calls for value added tax to be removed from sanitary towels.

The Treasury Economic Secretary, Mr Jock Bruce-Gardyne, said he saw no logical reason for singling out one particular personal hygiene product for special treatment. Then he added: 'In my experience most women have a tendency to use soap.' *Guardian* (Paul Gadsby)

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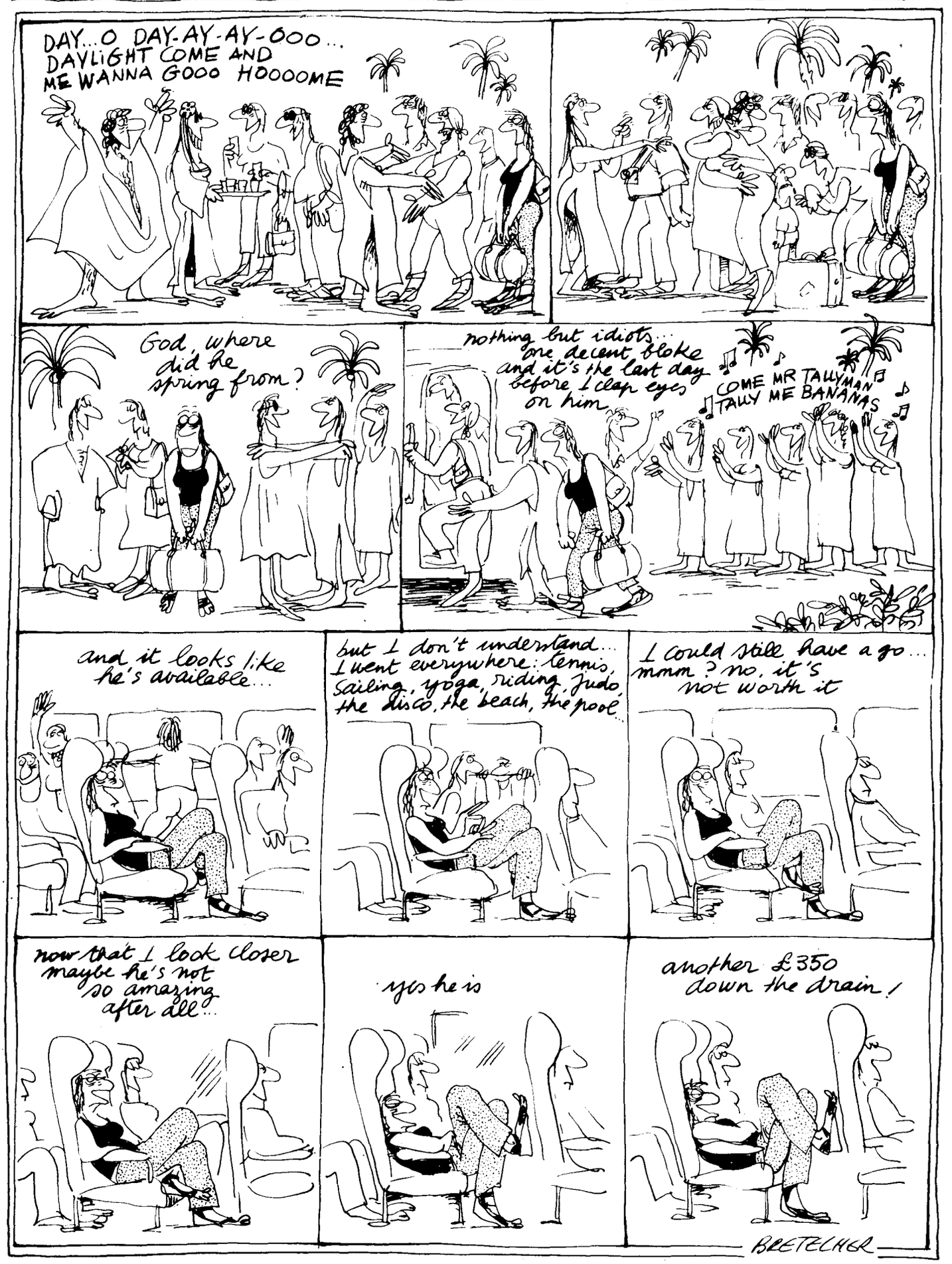
BRETECHER

FIASCO


DAY...O DAY-AY-AY-OOO...
DAYLIGHT COME AND
ME WANNA GOOO HOOOOME
God, where did he spring from?
nothing but idiots... one decent bloke and it's the last day before I clap eyes on him
COME MR TALLYMAN
TALLY ME BANANAS
and it looks like he's available...
but I don't understand... I went everywhere: tennis, sailing, yoga, riding, judo, the disco, the beach, the pool...
I could still have a go... mmm? no, it's not worth it
now that I look closer maybe he's not so amazing after all...
yes he is
another £350 down the drain!
BRETECHER

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LETTERS

Rewriting history

Nigel Williamson, 14 Meon Court, Rye Crescent, Orpington

Re-writing history is a common pastime in politics. Seldom can political history have been re-written so quickly, however, as by Peter Kellner (*NS* 16 July).

He claims that Michael Foot's objective in vetoing the candidature of Peter Tatchell in Bermondsey was 'to prevent the first by-election of 1982 from being a catastrophe for Labour'. He claims that in this objective Michael Foot succeeded.

In fact, the first by-election of 1982 was Glasgow Hillhead. Labour came third. By contrast, I believe that had Peter Tatchell been endorsed as Labour's candidate in Bermondsey and Bob Mellish had forced a by-election, Labour could have *won* the seat on the strength of Tatchell's campaigning record in the constituency. By all means, let us help remove Michael Foot from the spike upon which he impaled himself. But please don't justify his original inexcusable decision by re-writing history.

Less than kind

Eleanor Boateng, 7 Merrow Drive, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

It was kind, if somewhat patronising, of Mrs Bullmore and friends (*NS* Letters 23 July) to have said that the choice of Paul Boateng as Parliamentary Candidate for the Hemel Hempstead Constituency of the Labour Party would 'under other circumstances have been an excellent choice.' Less kind, and in the present circumstances quite unjustified, was her assertion that his selection is 'a total travesty of justice within the Labour Party'. This claim, which has been spread (with total disregard for the credibility of our Labour Party) in the Tory press, both local and national by Mr Corbett's supporters, is based upon the fact that in the ward nomination meetings Mr Corbett won 14 nominations and Paul Boateng won 2.

If we regard nomination meetings as smaller selection meetings this criticism might have some validity and protest be made on a national scale, since selection procedure is uniform throughout the country. The truth is, however, that nomination and selection meetings seem quite separate functions. Nomination meetings are, as their name implies, merely to provide names from which a short list is drawn; those so listed then appearing to argue their case for selection before the General Committee, who are expressly free from mandate in the final selection. Indeed in some constituencies the nomination meetings take the form of a social function where the candidates are informally quizzed and names sent for short listing.

This, however, is not the point on which this letter rests. Far more pertinent is the fact that a remarkably similar situation existed in 1965 when Mr Corbett was adopted as candidate by the Hemel Labour Party. At the time the expectation that the popular mayor Gilbert Hitchcock would be the only person shortlisted was such that only four wards bothered to hold nomination meetings. All of them nominated Mr Hitchcock. At the selection meeting Mr Corbett, who had received one nomination only (and that from the affiliated group the Young Socialists) was elected. The two cases are all but parallel and yet Mrs Bullmore writes of a 'total travesty of democracy within the party'. Perhaps Mrs Bullmore did not know of the 1965 selection figures, perhaps she regards Mr Corbett's selection also to be a travesty of democracy? If so, I disagree with her. Mr Corbett convinced the General Committee that he was the best candidate in 1965, Paul Boateng convinced the 1982 General Committee that he was the best candidate. Both were selected, both legally and constitutionally selected, as Parliamentary Candidate.

The time has come to face our real task: the defeat of the Thatcher Government and to work towards what my son Paul Boateng asked for in his selection address. 'Our immediate objective must be to unite around the building up of a mass campaigning party in Hemel, and nationally. To work for the early return of a Labour Government committed to Socialist policies and a just and caring society in which the right to work is absolute.'

Dramatis personae

Ian Britain, University of Melbourne, Australia

It is disturbing that so much of the space which you allowed for a review of my work (*NS* 25 June) should have been taken up with discussing the 'books' that I 'could have written about *Fabianism and Culture*'.

I would not wish to deprive your readers of the reviewer's brilliantly idiosyncratic ideas for writing such books. I cannot help thinking, however, that if I had had the benefit of Mr Samuel's advice beforehand, to write on the things which interest him, the end-result would have been most confusing.

First, it would have touched on many topics that have only the most remote or incidental bearing on the main subject. My *dramatis personae* were chosen for their relevance, and that meant excluding many figures who were (in Mr Samuel's own words) simply 'on the fringes of Fabianism'.

Mr Samuel seems disappointed that I did not allow my argument to 'overflow into footnotes'. This is puzzling criticism indeed from such a relentless scourge of the whole genre of Ph.D theses.

In the pedantic manner of those automatically benighted souls who have managed to complete a doctoral dissertion, I must point out that my aim was not to 'reverse' the image of the Fabians as 'administratively-minded, practical social reformers', or of their Society as 'a political society'. It was simply to reveal the aesthetic or cultural dimensions of these concerns, which the Fabians' antagonists have continually obscured. I tried to show that even those Fabians, like Sidney Webb, who did make an explicit division between the cultural and political spheres, continually bridged these spheres in their own writings and practices as socialists.

There was, as Mr Samuel rightly suggests, little that was 'apocalyptic' or 'metaphysical' in this enterprise. To suggest otherwise – or to deny an aesthetic dimension to any concerns which do not happen to fit those two labels – would be to travesty Fabianism and to impugn much of the world's artistic endeavour.

Simple solutions

Leif Mills, General Secretary, Banking Insurance & Finance Union, London SW19

Your recent editorial commented, rightly, on the proposals of the Home Policy Committee of the Labour Party to nationalise the four major English clearing banks.

It is disturbing that in an increasingly complex world some people still produce deceptively simple solutions – such as nationalisation of the banks.

As you, Sir, well know, we discussed the issue of ownerships of banks and insurance companies in some detail in the Committee to Review the Functioning of Financial Institutions under the chairmanship of Sir Harold Wilson. The Wilson Committee unanimously concluded:

> We recommend therefore against any extension of the public sector in banking and insurance by way of *nationalisation of existing* institutions.

Among the evidence we collected at that time was that the French nationalised banks operate in a commercial way and the fact that they were nationalised after the war has not *of itself* done anything to improve the flow of funds into manufacturing industry.

There is a strong case for looking at the ownership structure of all types of British financial institutions. We are very much of the view that there should be positive moves for employee participation at all levels – including board level. There is equally a strong case for looking at new types of institutions to improve the flow of funds for investment in industry: whether a lending facility as some of us on the Wilson Committee advocated, or a form of national investment bank. What is clear, however, is that the old-fashioned placebo of nationalisation is completely inappropriate.

In addition, from a staff viewpoint, the idea of the four major banks being nationalised poses considerable problems and dangers for future employment levels within those banks.

I hope these thoughts will be uppermost in the minds of the Labour Party NEC when it considers the Home Policy Committee's recommendations.

Baton Rounds

Tim Tate, Yorkshire Post, Leeds.

Your report, 'Baton Rounds', by Keith Lomax (*NS*, 23 July) is misleading in implying the story was broken by *Leeds Other Paper*.

I researched and wrote the original revelation that West Yorkshire Police had not returned the plastic bullets in question, and that the Police Committee had been deceived into believing the Home Office had sent them unrequested.

The resulting story was published in the *Yorkshire post* on Thursday, July 8 – a full eight days before *Leeds Other Paper* 'claimed the bullets were never supplied by the Home Office in the first place.'

Keith should beware claiming responsibility for glory that is not his own: 'his own', because Keith happens to work for *Leeds Other Paper*. Incidentally, there is no mention in the report of my disclosure that the rounds were ordered by the police direct from the Army. Which is odd, since he *lifted* everything else.

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Sun, sand and something to read

From waist-high wooden counters in stations, from shiny aluminium tiers in airports, from wobbly, not-quite revolving racks between the sun-tan lotion and the postcards, more paperbacks than usual are being picked over, hastily perused (a known name? a familiar imprint? an attractive cover or sympathetic-sounding blurb?), purchased and pushed into hand-luggage, mac pocket or sandy-bottomed duffel bag. So, for interest and maybe even to help with those moments of indecision when you're already late and you ***still*** can't find a 'good' book, we asked some of our contributors to choose their own holiday reading from paperbacks published within the last six months or so and then to explain the reasons for their choices.

John Coleman

Sip-and-dip reading ought to be something rich and strange, a treat long promised oneself. If it reactivates old knowledge too, so much the better. *Coningsby* (Oxford, £2.95) has just proved perfect for this product of a World War II evacuee's eccentric education: six years bogged down in 19th century British history, and hardly two facts left to rub together. 'Mr Disraeli *(alias* Dizzy) writes very curious reports to me of the House of Commons proceedings – much in the style of his books.' Thus good Queen Victoria in a letter to the King of the Belgians in 1852, handily hinting at the flavour of this glittering, lush, intrepid, witty, wishful yet anchored fantasy, published in 1844 as the first of the 'Young England' trilogy. Spanning roughly a decade after the Reform Bill and tracing the political and amorous fortunes of Dizzy's disguised nest of real noblemen, its idealised snobbery is marvellously matched by the nerve of introducing a cosmopolitan Jew, the king-maker Sidonia, as the greatest, wisest global aristo of them all. And surely no livelier inside job has been done on careerist politics and politicians, from egregious Taper and Tadpole to outragious Rigby.

Sheila M. Smith's preface is shrewdly appraising and many of her notes invaluable. But scholarship should have its sane limits. The pages are fairly pimpled with asterisks. Does one, after all, need 'Purgatory' and 'Inferno' explained, or the exact provenance of a bottle of Hermitage, or the meaning of *qui vive?* Also proposed for attention, as lesser-known curiosities, in the same, largely excellent World's Classics series: Trollope's Irish *The Kellys and the O'Kellys* (Oxford, £2.90), introduced by William Trevor, quietly edited by W. J. McCormack; Mrs Gaskell's *Sylvia's Lovers* (Oxford, £2.95), edited by Andrew Sanders. □

Charles Fox

Books written by the educated about the supposedly inarticulate usually end up sounding patronising. Thomas Hardy succeeded because he had a foot in both camps. But Stephen Reynolds had studied chemistry at Manchester University and gone off to write in Paris before facing up to what might be called the difficult simplicities. That was when he went to lodge with a fisherman's family in Sidmouth, and afterwards to work as a fisherman himself. In 1908 he published *A Poor Man's Life* (now available from OUP at £2.95), which was promptly acclaimed by Conrad. Later writings seem to have made no impact. Yet anybody coming fresh to this book must, like Conrad, recognise it as a minor classic.

It is written in the form of a journal, but using factitious names. Unlike *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists,* Reynolds's book never adopts a political stance. The author concentrates on the way that people behave and what they say. He has romantic notions about the nobility of manual labour, yet looks shrewdly enough at the people he meets or works with, picking out small details that build up – stealthily rather than obviously – into a panorama of what everyday life was like for one narrow segment of the English working class. Roy Hattersley contributes an enthusiastic introduction but seems unhappy about any attempts at transcribing regional dialects. This must be north-country arrogance, for Reynolds's reproduction of Devonshire speech strikes this Dorset-born reader as exact and perfectly comprehensible. □

Julian Barnes

Sartre always held Flaubert to be the emblematic literary enemy – an arid bourgeois perfectionist squatting on top of the heap – until he read the Letters. Then Flaubert came into focus for him (the correspondence, he remarked, was a classic example of free-association from a pre-Freudian couch), the focus grew into an obsession, and the philosopher spent the last decade of his life, to the dismay of his Maoist friends, trying to reinvent the novelist in his elephantine *The Family Idiot.*

Those who approach *The Letters of Gustave Flaubert* (edited and translated by Francis Steegmuller; Faber, £3.50) without initial Sartrean antipathy will be won over even more quickly, and for a wider set of reasons. This is a spectacular collection of letters, kaleidoscopic in tone: they are by turns coarse, elegant, witty, cerebral, speculative, sexy, riotous and depressed, but always effortlessly intelligent. They cover his life up to the publication and trial of *Madame Bovary,* taking in on the way his famous priapic travels in Egypt and his affair with the poet Louise Colet. 'Involvement' is probably a more accurate word than 'affair': though half the letters in this volume are addressed to Louise, they more frequently convey semi-sincere regret at not being able to see her than rapturous

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recollection of embraces exchanged. Gradually – and much against her will – she is transformed from mistress into artistic confidante. 'Gustave never speaks to me in his letters of anything except art – or himself,' she once complained. Her loss, however, is our gain.

Flaubert's central concerns were how to write (one section of letters amounts to a notebook of his laborious but triumphant hewing-out of *Madame Bovary*) and how to protect that writing against the incursions of life. The timelessness of these concerns – and the modernity of Flaubert's mind – effortlessly dissolve the time-gap of 150 years: reading these letters is like having direct access to the supremely detached mind of a supremely skilled writer who lives just over the road. This effect is much helped by the splendour of Francis Steegmuller's edition. It doesn't matter if you haven't read Flaubert's fiction, let alone a life of him: Steegmuller's linking commentary turns this book into a slyly unofficial biography. It is the finest imaginable edition of the finest collection of writer's letters I know.

Also recommended: *The Stories of John Cheever* (Penguin, £4.95), the best work of this under-rated American who died last month; and Arthur Koestler's *Bricks to Babel* (Picador, £3.95), a self-selected Portable which short-cuts a way for us through his remarkable corpus. □

Patricia Craig

O'Flaherty, O'Connor and O'Faolain are the three names that still spring most readily to mind whenever the Irish story is mentioned; O'Flaherty, whose *Short Stories* has just been issued by the Wolfhound Press (£2.95), is less urbane and artful than the other two, but no less powerful in feeling. He writes about the Aran Islands, where he was born, and he manages very effectively the shift between the riproaring and the austere, which characterises his literary manner. He goes in for stylised violence, melancholy and malaise; behind his stories you can sense a whole range of folk tales and folk-beliefs, enriching them.

Jane Gardam's *Black Faces, White Faces,* first published in 1975, has now come out in paperback (Abacus, £1.95) – it's a dazzling collection of related stories dealing with the effects of Jamaican sun and Jamaican insouciance on the staid English guests at the Pineapple Bay Hotel. It contains one or two unexpected and oddly-angled ghost stories, as does Fay Weldon's *Watching Me, Watching You* (Coronet, £1.50). These glimpses into the miseries of the female condition were criticised, when the book appeared last year, for the way they rely on masculine awfulness to make their point. Weldon's men drive their wives to lesbianism, thoughtlessly encumber them with droves of children, and even pull the hair out of their heads. The narrative tone, too, is sometimes a little smart and pert. For all that, the book is never less than entertaining, and it rises at moments to a kind of sardonic zestfulness.

Detective fiction makes agreeable holiday reading, and Keyhole Crime (a fairly new imprint) caters for all varieties of taste in this genre, at 95p a time. If you rate pungency higher than plot you may relish Aaron Marc Stein's *Chill Factor* and *Nowhere?;* for sub-Macdonald enthusiasts there is *The Lime Pit* (Jonathan Valin), and for the romantic-thriller addict Helen McCloy's *The Impostor.* Best of the selection I read are Simon Brett's *An Amateur Corpse,* which makes the most of its theatrical background, and *The Chief Inspector's Daughter,* by Sheila Radley, which is unpretentious and deft. □

Derek Mahon

One hero of our time who has never had his due is the poet F. X. Enderby, a seedy solipsist sprung from the fertile brain of Anthony Burgess. The three fictions (they are scarcely novels) of which he is the glum protagonist *(Inside Mr Enderby, Enderby Outside* and *The Clockwork Testament)* are now available in a single volume entitled simply *Enderby* (Penguin, £2.95). They trace his shambling yet frantic progress from Brighton lodgings to Rome, Tangier and New York as he is married by a glamorous journalist, flees from a murder rap, and spends a lonely semester in Manhattan, apparently dying of a stroke.

Somehow more felt (and less contrived) than that overweight frivolity *Earthly Powers, Enderby* – conceived, one suspects, as little more than a joke – grew into a memorable if episodic trilogy which, like all the best of Burgess, is trying to tell us something very unfashionable and just possibly very important. And it is extremely funny.

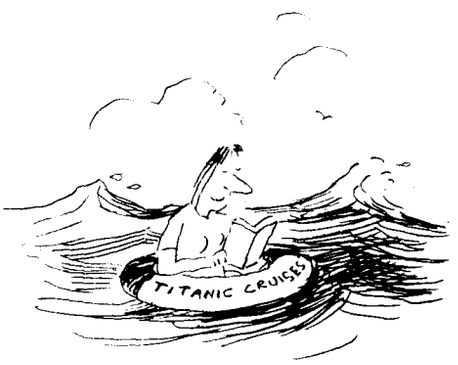
Penguin have also brought out the third volume of *Paris Review* interviews, *Writers at Work,* edited by George Plimpton (£2.95). This one features the usual dozen or so practitioners, of whom the usual three or four are excellent value. James Jones *(From Here to Eternity)* admits to the influence of Stendhal and Dostoevsky, and you will need a vacuum cleaner to pick up the names dropped by Cocteau; but Waugh, Céline and Bellow make the exercise worthwhile – the first discarding his irascible mask for once, the second meandering in precisely the morose, fatalistic vein of his narrators, the last recalling with asperity the youthful pressures which would have had him write 'like an Englishman' instead of a Russian Jew from Chicago.

Finally, and all too briefly: Oxford have issued the paperback of Walter Allen's *The Short Story in English* (£4.50). Like his *The English Novel,* this is surely destined to be a definitive reference-book; but it is more than that. Prof Allen brings to his subject the generous eclecticism of an old hand who has thought long and deeply. The result is both workmanlike and inspired. Areas of special interest are discernible (Kipling and Lawrence, Ireland and the American South); but these, far from unbalancing the book, rescue it from the spurious impartiality such surveys too often display. □

James Campbell

A great novelist's non-fiction can be like a visit to the dressing-room: something is revealed of the way in which the illusion is passed off, even if the mysteries of the performance remain intact. In its way, this special treat is as fascinating as the act itself. Graham Greene's *Ways of Escape* (Penguin, £1.50) is all the more an example of this as much of it is composed of prefaces written originally for a Collected Edition of his books. These include stories about the writing of his novels, both agonising and hilarious (plus a characteristic confession that he finds most of them unreadable), and many perceptive asides concerning the art of fiction.

It is difficult to think of compliments which Greene would not repudiate quickly



(he reads his bad reviews with more avidity than he does the good ones), therefore it will be enough to say that besides reminiscences of Vietnam, Haiti, the Secret Service, plus an abundance of the qualities his readers associate with him, this thoroughly enjoyable book contains a great deal of humour. I especially like the story of the Other – a man (perhaps more than one) who goes around the world posing as Graham Greene. One evening in a Rome hotel, the real Greene received a phone call from a woman. ' "Hello, Graham, this is Veronica." "Oh yes, how are you?" Who the hell, I wondered, was Veronica?' It transpired that she had once met and fallen for the Other, and now, happening to be in Rome, was keen for a reunion with this famous author. Greene went to meet her next evening, but finding a woman

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'with the extended face of an upper-class horse', he escaped.

Not so much humour in David Daiches's *Glasgow* (Granada, £2.50), but roughly everything else you could expect to find in such a book; warm-hearted, like the city it celebrates, this is an excellent introduction to the city which I, for one, was always encouraged to regard as Scotland's *real* capital – the other one being only for show. □

Jules Lubbock

James Bellini's record as a Cassandra of economic catastrophe is uncomfortably accurate, despite his turgid prose. In 1974 he anticipated the collapse of the car industry and the whole Midlands economy. Since the manuscript of the hardback of *Rule Britannia* went to press in autumn 1980, this unrevised reprint (Abacus, £2.75) is a test of his prophecy. Best is his remark that HMS *Invincible* only made sense within an imperial task force. The Falklands also confirmed his analysis of covert censorship in the BBC (which, in its role of Court Circular should be renamed RBC – Royal Broadcasting Corporation). Last year's plebiscite for the union of monarchy and aristocracy supports his general thesis that feudal power and property are unaltered since Domesday, and that the Industrial Revolution and democracy were a mere interlude. In 1980 (1.8m unemployed) he was predicting 4½ million by Domesday's 800th anniversary and the return of pre-industrial mob-riots: so when two Paras turn their rifles on the mob you can't say you weren't warned.

Michael Darlow and Gillian Hodson in their biography of *Terence Rattigan* (Quartet Books, £6.95) fail to convince me that his plays were any more critical of bourgeois values than they seemed at the time of *Look Back in Anger*. The greatest interest lies in observing how the career of this would-be Marxist old-Harrovian was moulded by his shrewd reverence for the tastes of elderly gentlewomen who filled London's theatres, then under the dictatorship of the nauseating Binkie Beaumont. A sexually unalluring affair with 'Chips' Channon, father of the present Arts Minister, to whom *The Winslow Boy* is dedicated, was the price for entry into court circles, where Prince Philip was on hand to sort out his writing blocks. The final act of the loyal Dramatist Laureate was to present his monarch with a bound set of his plays before setting off on a last drive through London's theatreland. □

Harriett Gilbert

Angela Carter is a pirate. Before her lawyers start scrabbling for their quills, I mean that she plunders the open seas of literature, psychology, philosophy, mythology and sex to build fantastic palaces of imagery and ideas. In *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* (Penguin, £2.25) centaurs, lost Amerindian tribes, funfairs, peepshows, *Gulliver's Travels* are all combined in an epic saga where Logic and Order are embattled to the death with Imagination and Desire. The outcome is both absolute and ambivalent. Explicitly, in the consciousness of her narrator-hero, implicitly in her writing style, Ms Carter maintains the tension throughout this mescalin trip of a book.

Equally magical in a misty, more Northern way, is American novelist Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping* (Penguin, £2.25). Concerned with borders – between madness and sanity, reality and fantasy, symbols and the things they represent – it tells the story of an orphaned adolescent who, with her younger sister, is raised in a house between lake and mountains by a succession of relatives. Left, in the end, to a nomadic aunt, the younger girl escapes to the 'real' world of town, make-up and boyfriends. The older remains with her aunt, in a world where the borderlines finally dissolve.

Alice Walker's collection of stories *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down* (The Women's Press, £2.50) deals with more concrete issues. Concerning the rape by a black man of a white, Atlanta, Civil Rights worker; the racist implications of pornography; a black woman fair enough to pass for white – they confront with honesty, courage and wit the conflicts of identity and loyalty of women who are also black. Largely set in the Southern States, the stories yet have a flavour of the best *New Yorker* fiction: tangy with intellectual and imaginative confidence. Alice Walker's complex, passionate *Meridian* is also published by The Women's Press, at £2.95. □

Stephen Brook

If you tend to dismiss most travel books as escapist literature, take a corrective look at Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon,* now reissued in paperback (Macmillan, £6.95). This massive book, all 1,150 pages of it, is the account of her travels in Yugoslavia in 1937. What is remarkable about it is that every page is suffused with a profound historical consciousness: provincial capitals, remote monasteries, sleepy seaports, Moslem mausoleums, all have their picturesque appeal, but Dame Rebecca is more interested in their continuing and harrowed existence through time. Brilliantly she unfolds the complex and tortuous history of the Balkans – the violent reigns of the medieval Serbian Kings, the succession of assassinations that punctuate more recent Yugoslav history, the tensions between opposed ethnic and religious groups, and above all the struggle to maintain independence against the pressures of her tyrannous imperialist neighbours Turkey and Austria.

Black Lamb is, of course, unreasonably

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Three Poems by Ivor Gurney

A wish

I would hope for the children of West Ham
Wooden-frame houses square, with some-sort stuff
Crammed in to keep the wind away that's rough,
And rain; in summer cool, in cold comfortable enough,
Easily destroyed – and pretty enough, and yet tough,
Instead of brick and mortar tiled houses of no
Special appearance or attractive show.
Not crowded together, but with a plot of land,
Where one might play and dig, and use spade or the hand
In managing or shaping earth in such forms
As please the sunny mind or keep out of harms
The mind that's always good when let go its way
(I think) so there's work enough in a happy day.

Not brick and tile, but wood, thatch, walls of mixed
Material, and buildings in plain strength fixed.
Likeable, good to live in, easily pulled
Down, and in winter with warm ruddy light filled –
In summer with cool air; O better this sort of shelter –
And villages on the land set helter-skelter
On hillsides, dotted on plains – than the too exact
Straight streets of modern times, that strait and strict
And formal keep man's spirit within bounds,
Where too dull duties keep in monotonous rounds.
These villages to make for these towns of today –
O haste – and England shall be happy with the May
Or meadow-reach to watch, miles to see and away.

Hedger

To me the A Major Concerto has been dearer
Than ever before, because I saw one weave
Wonderful patterns of bright green, never clearer,
Of April; whose hand nothing at all did deceive
Of laying right
The stakes of bright
Green lopped-off spear-shaped, and stuck notched,
crooked-up;
Wonder was quickened at workman's craftsmanship
But clumsy were the efforts of my stiff body
To help him in the laying of bramble, ready

Of mind, but muscle clumsy in helping; rip
Of clothes unheeded, torn hands. And his quick moving
Was never broken by any danger, his loving
Use of the bill or scythe was most deft, and clear –
Had my piano-playing or counterpoint
Been so without fear
Then indeed fame had been mine of most bright outshining;
But never have I known singer or piano-player
So quick and sure in movement as this hedge-layer,
This gap-mender, of quiet courage unhastening.

Autumn

Autumn, dear to walkers with your streaks and carpets
Of bright colours, spread like a boy's gift for the true boy,
Sacred for the love flowing over and unuttered even in making –
Have you too left me?

Never was trust to equal between man and his dear mates
Of tree or watercourse flowing by Cranham or past Hartpury.
Eternity promised: what unfaith could cause any shaking
In that love, near bereft me?

Earth spaces breathing dark incense (as the kind shower wets)
And woodlands stirring to blood-light, the heart all ready –
Could you not, with your untouched power, save me from this breaking
Tyranny; not Severn have safed me?

(Ivor Gurney, 1890-1937, began as a composer, served in the First World War, and subsequently suffered a breakdown which caused him to be confined in mental hospitals for the rest of his life. The *Collected Poems*, edited by P. J. Kavanagh, will be published shortly by Oxford University Press.).

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long, and yet one soon grows accustomed to the leisurely, sedate pace of the well-nourished prose, which always remains lively and unfailingly alert. Her travelling companions – her unflappable husband, the unstable Jewish-Serbian poet Constantine and his brutish German wife Gerda, the happy-go-lucky chauffeur Dragutin – gradually acquire all the rich presence of characters in a great novel.

The special poignancy of *Black Lamb* is not merely that Dame Rebecca is ever conscious of the past as she observes the present, but that the present itself appeared to be reliving the tragedies of the past. As she completed the book, Yugoslavia once again mounted a heroic but futile resistance to an invading power and was over-run by Nazi Germany. The country so painstakingly recreated in *Black Lamb*, topographically and historically, was crushed, and her friends disappeared forever. Dame Rebecca so successfully immerses us in the life of this tormented country that we share her grief just as we've shared her pleasures in its beauty, vitality and complexity. This is a great book, masterly, serene, moving. □

Nicolas Walter

When you have the opportunity to take some books away for a good long quiet read, are paperbacks really the right answer? They are cheap and light and compact, of course, but they are so hard to hold open properly and so easy to break in half completely. I must say that the books I prefer to have on holiday or in hospital are more often nice old clothbound classics in miniature or omnibus editions. One reason is that they tend to be clearly printed on good paper in strong bindings. Another reason is that in the circumstances of being able to read more deeply than usual I like reading back into my own past. So my choice will do this, though for once in paperback.

First comes George MacDonald, who with Rudyard Kipling opened my mind to real literature when I was six. In those days I naturally liked the children's fantasies – *The Princess and the Goblin, The Princess and Curdie, At the Back of the North Wind* – and only later came to his earlier book, *Phantastes*, subtitled 'A Faerie Romance for Men and Women'. Only later still did I understand why I continued to like it – because MacDonald, however fantastic his ideas, always wrote in simple language, very much in the tradition of Bunyan and Swift (whose fantasies also continue to live). If only his followers, from William Morris to J. R. R. Tolkien, had done the same! The new paperback appears in the Bookmarks series of reprints (Boxdell and Brewer, £4.95), and has a useful introduction by Derek Brewer, but it is horribly printed and bound, and it lacks the perfect illustrations by Arthur Hughes which were added to the posthumous edition of 1905.

Then comes Victor Hugo, whose *Les Misérables* carried me away in adolescence. The new translator, Norman Denny, is rightly critical of his predecessors, and his translation, which was first published by the Folio Society in 1976 and in two volumes in the Penguin Classics in

1980 (£3.95), must have been read by more people than all former versions. I have certainly enjoyed it enormously, but it is an enormous volume, and even if I survive reading it I don't think it will. Moreover, it still isn't a complete version, which seems a sad abandonment of the Penguin tradition, however verbose Hugo may have been.

Then comes Radclyffe Hall, whose *Well of Loneliness* was one of the first banned books I read. This pioneering lesbian novel, which was so absurdly found obscene in 1928, still seems strangely readable. As a heterosexual man, I am not much interested in the theme, and the treatment would now be found sentimental and coy in a women's magazine, but the passion and power remain. The new paperback joins Virago's amazing Modern Classics series at £3.50, and is better printed than some of its companions, but the old preface by Havelock Ellis is sadly missing and the new introduction by Alison Hennegan isn't very helpful.

Finally come two modern fantasists – for I see that I have chosen only fantasies of one kind or another. D. M. Thomas's very European *White Hotel* (Penguin, £2.25) and Salman Rushdie's very Asian *Midnight's Children* (Pan, £2.95) have already had more attention than they may seem to deserve, but I must say that they are among the very few new books which I have enjoyed as much as the many old ones I generally prefer. These two paperbacks are at last decently produced, being a King Penguin (good series, silly name) and a Picador, and are readable in every sense. If nothing else, Thomas and Rushdie show how the freedom of sexual expression following the end of the Lady Chatterley ban can actually make a novel better, and how fantasy appeals to every age. □

Politics Apart

Roy Hattersley's weekly contributions to The Listener magazine won him the 1981 Columnist of the Year Award. Here is a selection of fifty-one of these Endpieces, in which he steps aside from politics to give a witty, entertaining commentary on the world we live in, coupled with fond reflections on his native Yorkshire.

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Andrew Clements

The Flowering of Britain by Richard Mabey and Tony Evans (*Arrow*, £5.95) looks at first glance like another attempt to cash in on the burgeoning market for nature books, with some fetching photographs and a cosy text, but turns out to be something far more serious and valuable. Richard Mabey has written what is one of the best attempts at popularising natural history, in this case the botany of the British Isles, to have been published in the last five years. Comparisons with Attenborough's *Life on Earth* are totally valid. In this case, though, the television programme came after the book; the BBC-2 documentary of the same title was able to build upon the marvellous evocative series of photographs – as much of habitats as of plants – that Tony Evans provided to match Mabey's enthusiastic prose.

For *The Flowering of Britain* is as much a work of enthusiasm as it is an ecological study or a conservationist's manifesto. The authors are clearly bewitched by the variety of our native plants, impoverished though it might be in comparison with our continental neighbours. Scientific learning is worn lightly in this lucid history; botanical facts are interwoven with folklore and legend in its portraits of woodland and field, mountain and wasteland. So gently is the background sketched in that it leads to my only cavil – the index does not include scientific names. Though they can be found in the book for nearly all the plants mentioned, some reference list would have been useful, especially when vernacular names vary so much about the country and when the same name can be used for totally unrelated species in different regions. But as an introduction, as an effort to increase interest in a fast disappearing natural resource, this could hardly be bettered. Mabey's elegant mixture of anecdote and observation is likely to do more for the cause of our flora than any amount of shrill propagandising. □

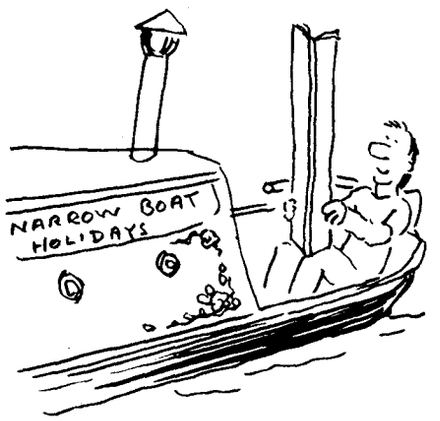
Anthony Barnett

Vacation paperbacks? If you are young, radical and heading south for a carcinogenic tan on the Mediterranean, try *Brighter Than a Thousand Suns* by Robert Jungk (Penguin, £1.95); just reissued, it is a classic account of how they made *it* work. For a new classic, do not be put off by the publicity for Schell's *The Fate of the Earth* (Picador, £1.95). You can skip the first chapter, much praised as a compelling description of how life on this planet wil be destroyed by a nuclear 'exchange': it's true, it is going to be awful. But the last chapter is worth reading twice. Much dismissed for its 'impracticality', Schell presents an overwhelming argument for the abolition of the nation state. There's enough here for an enjoyable fortnight of contemplation and argument that will stretch the political imagination, and what else are radical holidays for? Meanwhile, special interest forbids me from mentioning *Exterminism and the Cold War,* by E. P. Thompson and others (Verso, £5.50). Especially good as a gift for a foreign friend; it shows that not all of us are as insular as Margaret Thatcher.

But if you are no longer 'so young', if you are beginning to enter the left-wing form of the mid-life crisis and are asking yourself, 'what went wrong in the Sixties?', doubtless it's a country vacation this year. Take Elizabeth Wilson's *Mirror Writing* (Virago, £3.50). Ultimately, generations are judged by the quality of their memoirs. Wilson's is both intensely theoretical and warm; a marvellous combination. Will English self-reflection ever be the same?

If you are very old indeed and not so radical any longer and have other people to check out the *New Statesman* for you, then you must be Brezhnev. As you try to get it together enough on the Black Sea to survive another year, *Stalin's Successors* by Seweryn Bialer (Cambridge, £6.50) is a must. Happy reading, and a word of advice: retire.

Perhaps it's a family holiday and you are seeking a children's paperback that will let you sneak an enjoyable read. I've only one piece of advice and it's negative. Do not buy the latest Asterix: without Goscinny's touch even Uderzo's illustrations have gone sour. □



John Spurling

Dion Boucicault's was an almost forgotten name until in 1971, the RSC revived his earliest success, *London Assurance.* Richard Fawkes's biography (Quartet, £6.95) reveals Boucicault (1820-90) not only as the author of some 200 plays and adaptations and the missing link between Sheridan and Wilde, but also as a pioneer of playwright's royalties, author's copyright, fire-proof scenery, matinées, long runs, touring productions, publicity gimmicks, ensemble acting and arts centres. Twice bankrupted, a womaniser, a dandy and a wit, he earned fortunes and spent them in style. Fawkes's story of his life is a record of amazing energy and buoyancy. As often as fate, the critics, and his own recklessness pushed Boucicault down, he was popping up again in a trice, writing, acting, scheming for a new success. Every playwright should carry Boucicault's biography in his knapsack.

Robinson and Gallagher's *Africa and the Victorians* (Macmillan, £6.95) is equally indispensable to amateurs and connoisseurs of the British Empire. This study of 'the official mind of Imperialism' came out 21 years ago and stirred up fierce controversy over the relative claims of strategic and economic factors in the Scramble for Africa. Its second edition deals with some of the criticisms, but is basically unchanged – a fascinating and convincing analysis of Victorian motives and dilemmas.

Nigel Calder's report on the new physics, *The Key to the Universe* (Penguin, £3.95), is only intermittently intelligible, but then so is the universe even to our best theorists and experimenters. The difficulties are compounded by the incompatibility between the mathematical and the associative mind. The physicists coin or borrow words ('quark', 'charm', 'colour') which subvert rather than enhance understanding. Nevertheless, there are plenty of leaping hares to keep the associative mind happy: 'Controlled imperfection,' writes Calder, 'was the hall-mark of reality and, as it transpired, of the universe.' □

John Lucas

£3.25 may seem a great deal to pay for a lecture, but what Czeslaw Milosz has to say in his *Nobel Lecture* (Faber) is beyond price. It is essentially a plea for poets to be aware of 'certain things which protect people from internal disintegration and from yielding to tyranny', which can be known only through language and memory. He is appalled by the fact that 'our planet that gets smaller every year, with its fantastic proliferation of mass media, is witnessing a process that escapes definition, characterised by a refusal to remember'. And he has a foreboding 'of a not too distant future when history will be reduced to what appears on television, while the truth, because it is too complicated, will be buried in the archives'. Against such a possibility, the poet must stand guard, must choose to be a danger. He must never put the second-rate on the same level with the first-rate and he must speak out for and about the reality which is nowadays regarded as non-existent by those who think of literature as *écriture* and between whom and the totalitarian state there exists a hidden link, since 'speech feeding on itself' is perfectly acceptable to a state which regards the poet as dangerous only when he breaks free from 'autonomous systems of reference, enclosed within their own boundaries'.

W. B. Yeats's *Collected Plays* (Macmillan, £5.95) is a paperback re-print of the hardback which Macmillan originally brought out in 1952, and therefore *not* the Collected Plays (Macmillan's record as publisher of Yeats is a shameful one). Even so, there are 26 plays here and they do much to justify a growing conviction that, in spite of his potty theories about drama, Yeats is probably a great dramatic writer. Certainly, his versions of Sophocles are very remarkable; and the Cuchulain cycle is a tremendous imaginative feat. And to give the devil his due, £5.95 is an eminently reasonable price. □

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Stephanie Jordan

Two books about ghosts: one the historic sort that houses have bestowed upon them, the other the sort bestowed upon houses by the historic. *London and the Famous* by Katy Carter (Muller, £3.95) picks 50 blue-plaqued and similar houses, giving resumés of the noted occupants' lives. Predictably, the area of Cheyne Walk and Tite Street has the highest concentration of notables, with the ghosts of Turner, Brunel, Whistler, Carlyle, Scott, George Eliot, Wilde and Mark Twain jostling for the paranormal limelight. Oddly, the GLC frequently honours spots where the famous stayed only briefly, like Queen Anne Street, W1, where Berlioz spent the time of the Great Exhibition. Some of these monuments are divorced by modern urban life from any sense of them as they were; Hogarth's house now stands beside an awful roundabout on the Great West Road, for example. But this book, like the addresses in it, is curiously compelling.

The only person to star both in Ms Carter's book and in Marc Alexander's *Haunted Houses You May Visit* (Sphere, £1.95) is T. E. Lawrence, who can occasionally be seen in Arab gear at Clouds Hill, Dorset, although you are even more likely to hear the roar of his Brough Superior motorcycle on which he was killed in 1935. Whether or not you wish to believe in any of the tales of malicious poltergeists, 'radiant boys' and carriages drawn by teams of headless horses, there are certainly skeletons mouldering, literally, in the cupboards of many of our ancestral houses – like the young man in Queen Anne style boots recently found under the flagstones at Longleat House. Along with a Stinking Man and a Screamer, my favourite is a phantom seen by a Taunton lady, swaying at the foot of her bed in evening dress. The only thing Mr Alexander overlooks is the singular, historic British passion for the demon drink. □

Among this week's contributors:

JULIAN BARNES is the author of *Metroland* and *Before She Met Me* and TV critic of the *Observer*.

HOWARD BRENTON'S most recent play was *The Romans in Britain*.

JAMES CAMPBELL was until recently Editor of *The New Edinburgh Review*.

DEREK MAHON'S new collection of poems, *The Hunt by Night*, will be published in November.

NICOLAS WALTER is the Editor of *The New Humanist*.

JOHN LUCAS teaches at Loughborough University. He recently co-edited the *Poems of G. S. Fraser*.

WILLIAM BOYD'S new novel, *The Ice-Cream War*, will be published shortly.

PATRICIA CRAIG is engaged on a study of contemporary Irish poetry.

THEATRE:

A crazy optimism

HOWARD BRENTON describes the unexpected high spirits generated by *Danton's Death*, which opened this week at the National Theatre

A scene from *Danton's Death*

There is always one question you ar asked about a play you have worked on that gives rise to murderous thoughts. With Georg Büchner's *Danton's Death* the question is 'But – was he for or against the Revolution?' We are so simplistic and childish in our 'cultural life' in this country. For all the sophistication, the arts columns, the arts courses, the measure of free speech and relative lack of censorship, the 'cultured' among us can, it seems, only ask, 'Who is the goody, who is the baddy, and what does the writer want me to think?' Be it the Falklands War or a play in the theatre, the pundits debate politics or art in terms of a third rate TV crime series. In *Danton's Death* Camille Desmoulins, the brilliant journalist beloved by both Danton and Robespierre, lets fly at this reduction of everything to an artificial 'good' and 'bad', a grammar of thought and feeling in which the real cannot be described or discussed. The historical Desmoulins did actually write such an article; but you can, as with Hamlet on acting, catch the dramatist's rage about the mis-representation he knew his work was in for:

> I tell you, if they don't get everything in wooden reproductions in their theatres, concerts, art exhibitions, they won't even listen. But if they get a ridiculous marionette and they can see the strings moving it up and down and they can see its legs creaking along in iambic pentameters, they say 'What truth! What understanding of human nature, how profound!' Take any tiny insight, any fatuous notion or tin-pot aphorism, dress it up and paint it in bright colours and parade it about for three acts until it gets married or shoots itself, and they cry 'What idealism!' But turn them out of the theatre into the street and, oh dear, reality is just too sordid. They forget God himself, they prefer his bad imitators. Creation is being newly born every minute, within them and all around them, glowing, a storm glittering with lightning: but they hear and see nothing. They go to the theatre, read poems and novels and praise the caricatures. To creation itself they say 'How ugly, how boring.'

To answer the question. Büchner was more than *for* the Revolution, he was, though writing forty-one years after the events of the play, in a very real sense *in* it. His father was a prosperous doctor in the service of the autocratic ruler of the Grand Duchy of Darmstadt, a state with a population of 700,000. The young man opened his eyes and saw the inhuman, half-feudal

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society he was born into and raged at it. While at the small University of Giessen he joined a revolutionary group, 'The Society for Human Rights'. He wrote, in a letter to a friend, 'The relationship between the poor and the rich is the only revolutionary element in the world.' He composed a pamphlet, 'The Hessian Messenger', addressed to the peasants, exhorting them to insurrection: 'With their drums the soldiers drown the sound of your sighs, with their rifle butts they smash your skulls . . . They are the lawful murderers who protect the lawful robbers'. The pamphlet had a famous slogan: 'Peace to the hovels! Death to the palaces!' But the conspirators were betrayed to the police (Büchner suspected a close friend). One, Pastor Wiedig, the group's mentor, was tortured in prison and committed suicide two years after being arrested. Another was released, insane, after three years; another was in prison for four years. Büchner fled to Darmstadt and his family's house where, forbidden to write anything by his father and under constant police surveillance, tormented with fear for his arrested comrades and for himself, he wrote *Danton's Death* secretly in five weeks, then fled to France. He was twenty-one.

The play he wrote is not (as is often said) a tragedy, but a comedy, a celebration of what we are; like all the great comedies it sings and celebrates, it does not judge. That is why those who rummage about in the play for the goodies and the baddies get so thoroughly lost. All the people in the play made the Revolution, from the royalist General Dillon to the idealist St Just with his fiercely egalitarian vision. They are all given their voice and they are all responsible. 'The lava of the Revolution flows' is a line twice used in the play. For Büchner, the play was what the world was going to be like, the Revolution was never going to go away. History has proved him right, of course. Asked, 'What was the outcome of the French Revolution?' Mao Tse-Tung replied, 'It is too soon to know.'

Because it is written by a revolutionary from within, the play depicts horror and despair with great accuracy. In one extraordinary scene Büchner cracks into Robespierre's skull and dramatises the great man's conscience – he knows that if he is wrong, he is damned.

A Tale of Two Cities pales beside such intensity. To illustrate the complexity of Büchner's writing about the Terror, two passages. First, a letter that he wrote to his *fiancée:*

> I have been reading the history of the Revolution. I felt as though crushed by the hideous fatalism of history. I find in human nature a terrifying sameness, in human institutions an irresistable power, bestowed on all and on none. The individual mere foam on the wave, greatness a mere accident, the sovereignty of genius only a puppet-play, a ridiculous struggling against an iron law, to recognise it is our highest achievement, to control it impossible. Never again shall I feel inclined to bow down before the performing horses and the corner-boys of history. My eyes have grown accustomed to the bloodshed. But I am no guillotine blade. 'Must' is one of the execrations pronounced at the baptism of mankind. The dictum, 'It must needs be that scandal cometh; but woe to him through whom scandal cometh!' is terrible. What is it in us that lies, murders, steals? I cannot bear to pursue the thought.

This is often quoted to show that Büchner had despaired and turned reactionary, but in *Danton's Death* the thoughts of that letter mutate into something else. Danton and his friends are in their cell, about to leave for the tumbril. The Dantonists are like peacocks, working themselves up to flash their tails at the waiting crowd outside –

Danton: When history comes to open its tombs, despots may yet choke on the stench of our corpses.

Herault: We stank pretty high in our lives, too. You're talking to posterity Danton, not to us at all.

Camille: He puts on a face to be dug up in stone by the archaeologists of the future. All that effort, pursing your lips, painting your face, putting on a good accent. We should take off our masks. Then we'll see, like in a room of mirrors, only the infinitely repeated, age-old image of the fool, the joker's head. We are very like each other. All villains and angels, idiots and geniuses, all things in one. We all sleep, digest food, make children, we are all variations in different keys on the same tune. That's why we strut about, put on faces: we embarras one another because we know each other so well. And now that we've all eaten ourselves sick at the same time don't let's hold napkins up to our mouths and pretend we've not got bellyache. Yell and groan as it takes you. No heroic gestures, no witty sallies. Spare yourselves the trouble. We all know each other.

Herault: Yes, Camille, let's sit down and scream. Why be tight-lipped when you're in pain? Greeks and Gods screamed aloud, Romans and Stoics pulled the heroic faces.

Danton: Greek or Roman, they were all Epicureans, like the rest of us. They did what made them feel impressive. Why not drape your toga about you and cast a long shadow? Why torment ourselves?

I would not pretend the play is a barrel of laughs. But the comic structure of the scenes, the under-cutting, the unexpected twisting and lifting of scenes, struck the actors increasingly in rehearsal. They had expected to be depressed performing it; instead a gaiety overtook everyone working on it. Jokes flew constantly in the rehearsal room. You can see why from the passage quoted.

The intellectual despair of the letter has changed in the play to a crazy optimism. Once you cease to be frightened of the content of the play, in the same way that the characters are not frightened, the whole map of the socialist and communist tradition unfurls itself with all the marshes, volcanoes and precipices clearly marked. In Danton, we see the difficulties true libertarians have always had with bad conscience, indulgence and general disorganisation; with Robespierre there is the classic difficulty of 'holding the centre', against Left and Right; in the second tier of the members of the Committee of Public Safety there are corrupt cadres saying one thing to the party and another thing among themselves; in St Just there is the danger of trying to turn a totally impersonal and determinist view of history into a political policy; and again and again in the street-scenes there is the insistence that, good, let death come to the palaces, but if peace does not come to the hovels then the exercise is meaningless. □

ART: John Spurling

Entering a new age

The Wellington Museum *Apsley House*
Hayward Annual 1982: British Drawing *Hayward*
Chinese Traditional Painting: Five Modern Masters *RA*

The refurbishment of **Apsley House** at Hyde Park Corner was described by Simon Jervis last week as a 'post-modernist exercise'. Mr Jervis, the Deputy Keeper of Furniture and Woodwork at the V & A, which administers the house, has been in charge of the exercise, begun in 1976. The house, originally built for Baron Apsley, the second Earl Bathurst, from designs by Robert Adam, was bought by the Duke of Wellington two years after Waterloo and presented to the nation in 1947. Damaged by bombs in the Second World War, its restoration then consisted basically of painting the walls in Adam colours and displaying the contents in an austere 'modernist' manner – bare floors, no curtains, pictures hung in a single row 'on the line', objects set out with plenty of space round them. Mr Jervis and his team have been 'trying to get back the grandeur', to return the interior and even the colour of the outside railings to what they were in the Duke's time. Carpets and curtains have been made to his original patterns; the pictures have been hung again *en masse* – there were 134 on the walls of the Waterloo Gallery in his time, but only 38 during the 'modernist' era – and as nearly as possible in the places he chose for them; and the astonishing services of china and plate, the medals, orders and batons presented to him by grateful European potentates have been crowded together again in their old cabinets or replicas of them. This is what Mr Jervis means by 'post-modernism' – it does not quite amount yet to putting back the bobbled velvet cloths on your tables and mantelpieces, but it clearly has something in common with our present mood of neo-imperialism, revived romanticism and the rejection of the hard, bare facts of post-war European history and culture. Indeed a study of history and its pendulum effect might have warned Orwell that by the time 1984 dawned in Britain it would be likely to have at least as much of the flavour of 1884 – when Wolseley led the task-force to rescue Gordon from Khartoum – as of the Stalinist one-party state.

The **Hayward Annual** – devoted this year to British drawings selected from an open submission–is more obviously post-modernist than Apsley House. That's to say that where one might mistake Mr Jervis's exercise for a simple matter of putting the clock back, the drawings at the Hayward are a volatile mixture of still-persisting modernism, straight reaction and the many shades between. John Elderfield, the Director of the Department of Drawings at the Museum of Modern Art,

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New York, points out in his catalogue introduction that modernism has already been interrupted twice (in the 1890s and 1930s) by 'periods of eclecticism and turbulence' and that

> renewal, it seems, always begins in retrogression. The impetus of modernism having apparently faltered and the avant-garde exhausted its extremist possibilities, drawing happily opens the atavistic door that leads hopefully to fresh beginnings.

Certainly this exhibition is a pleasure to go round in a way that I cannot remember any previous Hayward Annual being. Its pleasure consists in its general unpredictability rather than in any single masterpieces, but the best things all lie somewhere between the arid pattern-making of such conventional modernists as Noel Forster, Henry Mundy, Martin Naylor and David Tremlett and the equally sterile school of self-consciously technical figure drawing which one associates with Euan Uglow (one of the five selectors). The term drawing has been liberally interpreted, so there are some richly-coloured abstracts – by Ben Hancocks, Derek Stockley, Gary Wragg – as well as collages and, on the balcony, a tangle of bent scaffolding made by two artists at deliberate cross-purposes (an idea whose time has definitely gone); but the surprises are those in which, using nothing but traditional materials – pencil or charcoal – the artist's feelings for a place or a person cross the footlights, as it were, directly and intimately. Brian Peacock's twilit *Garden, Shadows,* Assheton Gordon's 7 by 16 foot *Working Drawing for Laputa,* Sebastian Verney's square of tangled charcoal jungle, *Inner Adventure,* Ronald Boyd's Flemish Renaissance view, *Landscape Autumn,* Peter Archer's powerfully three-dimensional *Angela Resting,* Christopher Corr's Impressionistic *The Neva and Alexandr Nevsky Square,* Thomas Deakins's four-square piece of American realism, *A Steinway on Holiday,* Gerald Jarman's *A Soldier,* stretched out straight across the paper in death or sleep, Paul Nicholls's dizzy view from the gods of the stage in *Her Majesty's Theatre* – these are as eclectic in their borrowings as in their effects. The artist's ages range from 27 to 52 and they were all previously unknown to me, but if post-modernism means this kind of truth to subject and this authoritative commandeering of whatever style best suits its purpose, who but formalists would quarrel with it?

The Chinese too, since the death of Mao, have been picking up their traditional culture from the corners where the Red Guards kicked it. Only one of the 'five modern masters' at the **RA** – Pan Tianshou – lived long enough to suffer persecution during the Cultural Revolution, but it's probably safe to say that the other four would have done, if only because they were teachers and writers on art as well as painters and because they have been sent to the RA under the official auspices of the present government of China. Although the youngest of the group, Fu Baoshi, was born in 1904 and his subjects included a railway in Rumania and landmarks associated with the Long March, his style was chiefly modelled on the Ming painter Shi Tao. The other four were indebted both for style and subject matter to the long Chinese past: Huang Binhong, born the same year as Toulouse-Lautrec, painted scholars and retired cabins among mountains and streams; Chen Zhifo, born in 1896, specialised in birds. Pan Tianshou himself, the Red Guards' victim, seems to have been the most rugged and expressionistic of the group, but his technique of finger-painting went back to the early 18th century and his use of seals and inscriptions had a still longer history. The paintings are not seen at their best herded together in the barrack-like setting of the RA's Diploma Gallery and the exhibition's title is misleading to us. To mount a show called British Traditional Painting 1886-1966 would imply something of the banality and feebleness of an RA Summer Show, a failure to change, a timid exploitation of once fruitful ideas. The Chinese tradition is quite different, a record of subtle change within strict limits, a process of acquiring ancestral skills in order to emulate, vary and comment upon ancestral performances. In practice, of course, our best artists do the same thing, but we like to believe them all self-made originals, as if our current flowed on for ever towards some distant horizon. The Chinese current flows back and forth, from past to present and present to past. Almost any one of these traditional paintings would animate a room, since the artists' skill and daring are as carefully studied and blended as those of a Chinese acrobat. If post-modernism has a future it may be along the lines of the Chinese tradition. □

Emma Douglas's *Over-50s Ballroom Dancers Waiting for Results* at the Hayward

FILMS: John Coleman

Gaudy works

Heatwave (AA) *Screen on the Hill*
Rollover (AA) *Warner; others*
Burning an Illusion (AA) *Screen on the Green; Ace, Brixton; Ace, Peckham*
Richard Pryor Live on the Sunset Strip (X) *Dominion*

'I guess I don't make a very good Joan of Arc', says Judy Davis, twisting her mouth every which way but shut. To tell the blunt truth, this Australian actress who sprang to our notice with *My Brilliant Career* doesn't make a very good Kate Dean either, the anarchic spanner hurled into the gaudy works of Phillip Noyce's **Heatwave.** But then no one stands much of a chance in this fancy, Sydney-based thriller about corrupt property developers and irate local residents. In *Backroads* and *Newsfront* Mr Noyce cast a marvellously shrewd and calculating eye on his native land before siphoning up the stuff of life from it. Here – give or take a glance or two at the harbour city and its environs during a Xmas-to-New Year heatwave – he seems to be bent on proving he can out-Hollywood Hollywood when it comes to *film noir.* The unfortunate outcome is a fragmented plot (scripted by several hands), some infuriating camera trickery (little spasms of jerk-motion), and a lot of useful thespians hamming desperately as if waiting for the next bit of jigsaw to be handed them. Kate, the neighbourhood do-gooder of apparently private means, sees her best woman friend just vanish in the struggle against a mushrooming tycoon determined to build a multimillion-dollar residential complex, 'Eden', resembling a giant greenhouse, over the ousted bodies of reluctant tenants.

Elsewhere, there is the nice, bewildered, 'idealistic' architect of Eden, Steve (Richard Moir), leant on by his superiors and briefly bedded by Kate; a slimy, foreign-sounding strip-club owner who suggests Steve work for him; this fellow's skinny ex-whore, stripper and junkie; a smiling, ambiguous reporter; Steve's money-strapped boss, looking like an uncrumpled Clive James; and they all speak their lines against an intrusive, after-Altman aural background of radio bulletins and loud asides. The arty closing shots, during which the camera shifts mutely over assorted, empty rooms, wind-fluttered by the awaited storm, towards a balefully blocked drain on an abandoned building site, clearly ask to be classed as a *tour de force*. But farce is by then the name of the game.

The kind of conspiratorial tension and high-low intrigue Noyce is after finds an authentic home in the first reel or so of Alan J. Pakula's **Rollover,** where Jane Fonda (Pakula's mesmeric collaborator in *Klute*) is deviously, then amorously supported by financial troubleshooter Kris Kristofferson in her bid to take over control of her murdered husband's petrochemical empire. This is computerland, as

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a prolonged stare at the thousand lit windows of a skyscraper stresses, and much is made of the frantic floor dealings of machine-juggled money, where huge fraud is more easily cloaked than petty pilfering. Arabs, gold and a right old cop-out of an apocalypse disappointingly figure in a puzzle that earlier promises solution: not dissolution. Hume Cronyn is great as a fearsomely bland banker; there is a funny-erotic grand staircase embrace between Fonda and Kristofferson that begins with the lady dressed in white for a dinner date and ends in her turning up in black; then all thoughts of Hitchcock fade. Surely not even that offhand master would have let – on reflection – the killing of a magnate of the Fonda-husband's importance slip by so casually, unprobed, with not a cigar unturned. But you will have to see the scarcely recommendable movie to know what I mean.

Firmly back in the world of the living, alive and suffering and set in the West Indian community of West London, is Menelik Shabazz's **Burning an Illusion,** backed by the British Film Institute Production Board and none the worse for that. The didactic skeleton of this finely acted film is formed of the plight of black women coming to racial and political consciousness in the defensively macho world of black men. Thanks to Shabazz it is persuasively fleshed. Cassie MacFarlane gives superb shading to her attractive Pat, a black girl with middle-class ambitions, a steady job and a pleasant flat, into whose life and finally bed intrudes restless Del (Victor Romero, also excellent), a natural if guilty exploiter who loses his job and lands up in jail. Pat's resentment is gradually, glowingly converted into a sense of communal belonging, a desire for the knowledge that is (in theory) power. Her obsessive experiments with make-up and hairstyles lapse; more crudely, she is seen chucking a Barbara Cartland paperback into the dustbin. If this over-simple and wishful 'growth' into positive thinking, echoed by Del's transformation in prison, were all, one might pass on, rueful that other illusions were rampant. But the lived strength of the piece is actually elsewhere, in the day-to-day street and partying commerce of the young blacks, the card-playing youths forced into wary toughness, the comic, sad and supportive confidences of the girls. *This* burns.

And, showbiz leagues away, in another country, **Richard Pryor Live on the Sunset Strip** quite flays the funnybone. The soft-eared or ordinarily fastidious are warned it may take a few minutes to accommodate to the monotonous flak of fucks and motherfuckers gunning from this extraordinary black actor's mobile mouth. Then the fellow (filmed during stage performances) takes toll. He becomes zoo animals, and the spectator safely scorning them: then he's a real lion in real Africa, a mass of menace, or a swaggering pair of cheetahs chatting to give their prey a head start. He hands you the gut-twisting sexual pangs of male jealousy, the walkaway woman's never-more-seductive cool. Looping verbal loops, he is into the story of his celebrated combustion and the true and experienced terrors of drug addiction. Pryor redefines black humour. □

TELEVISION: William Boyd

Gung-ho

Those Tory MPs dismayed by Archbishop Runcie's lack of gung-ho spirit over our Great Victory in the Falklands will be able to console themselves with reruns of the first major documentary to have emerged from the conflict: BBC-1's eight-part **Task Force South.** Here was a chance, one thought, to get things straight, to produce an account of the war under conditions where accusations of aiding and abetting the enemy and lowering national morale need no longer apply. And, what's more, under circumstances that should be a gift to your average documentary maker, namely an eager public who sensed there was more to be told and, perhaps most valuable, a public who, if not well informed, was at least cognisant of all the major facts, geography, names of key personalities etc.

So why was *Task Force South* – or at least the two episodes we saw last week – so wretchedly bland, almost insultingly simple in its tone and approach? It was as if a decision had been taken not to make the thing too complicated, as if it were aimed at an intermediate class of foreign language students – a teaching aid in an 'O' level course on contemporary British history. There was a lot of skilful editing on show and for much of the time the pictures were allowed to tell their own story, but the narration – supplied by Richard Baker and Brian Hanrahan – and the editorial approach seemed studiously inoffensive and pussyfooting. There was a notable absence of comment over the Carrington resignation and the merest nod at Al Haig's furious shuttling. Both those topics, I'll concede, are particularly gamey cans of worms, and I dare say that it could be argued that even lifting the lid for a second or two could eat into time that could be more profitably used elsewhere: but some indication of the complexities and controversies surrounding them was definitely required. Thus far at least, it doesn't seem to be forthcoming.

The first two programmes dealt with the initial days of the crisis and the despatch of the fleet and here, it seemed to me, was another manifest lapse. The fact that there was a deal of jubilant unreflecting patriotism in the air at the time was incontrovertible and was clearly established by the pictures. But the narration failed to comment on the illusory nature of this elation or display any of the sobering but necessary ironies with which hindsight has now provided us. The most remarkable phenomenon of the early days of the crisis was exactly this dangerous self-delusion about the nature of war that appeared to have almost the entire country in its chilling grip. The prime function of any programme dealing with those heady days in April should be first to point out and highlight the cruel absurdities of the 'Stick it up your junta' spirit and then do its utmost to eradicate any residual traces. There is no sign of that happening at the moment in *Task Force South*.

There are some more intriguing reassessments going on, however, in **Reputations** (BBC-2), in which this week Anthony Howard looked at the life and career of Kenneth Tynan. Were it not for his days as theatre critic of the *Observer* it could be fairly said of Tynan that he was among that class of people – growing alarmingly large these days – who are famous for being famous; but even this nugget of good work proved hard to evaluate for the friends and colleagues of the critic who reminisced in the programme. No, Tony Richardson said, Tynan had nothing to do with the success of *Look Back in Anger* or with the great days of the Royal Court. And as far as Gore Vidal was concerned the most abiding feature of his memories of Tynan's working life was an 'ongoing career anxiety'.

So what was it about Tynan's criticism that made it so special? Some examples were read which seemed quite witty and irreverent, and it's clear that he was a talented journalist; but these abilities, plus *Oh, Calcutta!* and his TV effing and blinding, can't really explain why the man is so famous. Indeed a faint air of bafflement made itself evident as the programme progressed, as if the participants had begun to ask themselves the same question. A case of the emperor in Y-fronts rather than totally naked. □

THEATRE: Benedict Nightingale

All agog

The Twin Rivals by GEORGE FARQUHAR *Pit*
Windy City by TOM MACAULAY & DICK VOSBURGH *Victoria Palace*

The Twin Rivals was a flop at Drury Lane in 1702, according to the 25-year-old Farquhar, because it was too moral, or at least insufficiently lewd. And it is perfectly true that audiences raised on Etherege's Dorimant and Wycherley's Horner might have found his handling of his two protagonists severe to the point of sanctimony. Benjamin Wouldbe's desperate efforts to grab title, estate and bride from his twin brother, who is lucky enough to have been born half-an-hour earlier than himself, end in humiliation and beggary. The rake Richmore, caught trying to ravish the girl his nephew loves, is forced to marry the mistress he has impregnated and is plotting to foist on the boy as a wife. Though nowadays we'd doubtless acquit Farquhar of venturing into areas too grave for comedy – his own rueful self-accusation – there are times when John Caird and his company have to work hard, perhaps too hard, to keep the fun going and the going funny.

It's easy to imagine a more sombre production of *The Twin Rivals*. Indeed, it's possible to imagine one that differed only in the authenticity of its seriousness from the 'melodrama' that one standard work of reference will quaintly claim the play to be. After all, who laughs when Richmore girds himself for rape with the words, 'I'm worth £5,000 a year, £20,000 in my pocket, and may I not force a toy that's worth scarce £1,500?'? Farquhar had his own battles

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with poverty; and his distaste for the wealthy and privileged, or at least for those who allow wealth and privilege to erode their souls, is only too apparent in the play. Cumulatively, it offers a scathing picture of a moneybag society, in which those without are all agog to pander to those with, especially if the latter's whim is to squander, corrupt or destroy. And yet even this has its indisputably comic aspects. Who doesn't laugh when the lawyer Subtleman proposes to correct Wouldbe's failure to leave everything to Benjamin by providing his corpse with a suitably inscribed, suitably placed piece of paper – and then goes offstage with hammer and chisel to prise open the teeth, insert the message beneath the tongue and solemnly extract it, and swear with perfect truthfulness that these were indeed the last words to come from the paternal mouth?

Unsurprisingly, the production has its awkwardness. If the strain of keeping us amused sometimes shows, so too does the strain of coping with naturalistic detail on a set that consists of 16 boxes surrounded by the audience's knees. And yet, on the whole, Caird strikes a fine, adept balance between artifice and reality, humour and sobriety. The costumes are mostly white or cream-coloured, giving the impression the cast has been dipped en masse in bleach, and often pretty bizarre. Mike Gwilym's Benjamin looks at one point like a dilapidated bride in a tatty wedding-dress, at another like a fancy biscuit covered with icing; Roger Allam's Richmore resembles a fur hearthrug and Jane Carr, playing his intended victim, a yellowing Cabbage White. Yet even Gwilym, twisting in mottled envy or cackling and dancing in an ecstasy of avarice, is careful not to stylise the inner man too much, too far. At some more or less essential level, beneath their own extravagance and behind the plot's absurdities, these spoiled, savage, foolish, funny and (just occasionally) loyal and generous creatures are inhabitants of the same planet as the rest of us.

This is a play well resurrected and rehabilitated. At the Victoria Palace, though, resurrection has been followed, if not exactly by dismemberment, at least by a degree of mutilation. There's a kind of musical adaptation where the songs successfully carry forward the narrative and, sometimes, expand the characters of those delivering them; there's a kind in which the songs, while serving no such specific function, have enough musical or verbal merit to justify their insertion; and there's a kind whose songs aren't a lot more than a sort of decorative Polyfilla, gratuitously plugged into the holes that have been pointlessly blown in the body of the original. **Windy City** is by no means the worst example I've seen of this last category. The set, a trundling blend of prison, press-room, sheriff's office, stairs and landings, backed by skyscrapers and the Chicago el, is splendid. The lyrics, when audible, aren't bad. The authors have shown initiative in restoring to the text a black alderman lopped from the original. The acting, while less than magnetic, is perfectly competent. But, oh, wouldn't we far, far rather have seen *The Front Page* itself? □

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2730 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

Oscar Wilde defined fox-hunting as 'the unspeakable in pursuit of the uneatable'. Wildean definitions, please, of a computer, modern maths, a deep-freeze, or any other commonplace of modern life that would be new to Oscar. By 13 August.

No 2727 **Set By A. Boteman**

We asked for extracts from translations of foreign works by unlikely authors – Coward's Ibsen, Wodehouse's Flaubert etc.

Report **By Jack Russell**

Not bad, not bad. Still, a lonely week this, with colleagues boiling their heads in Samoa, Prestatyn, etc. The Complex corridors are silent, the machinery dust-sheeted and somehow reproachful; there is no-one with whom to enjoy Stoppard's Chekhov or Wodehouse's Camus, except the Whistlers and Sickerts gazing dolefully down from their tarnished frames. 'Wish you were here', write trainee adjudicators from Clacton and Martinique. Me too. Meanwhile, the customary book token to each of those printed.

Stoppard: *Three Sisters*

Olga: Ah, Moscow!
Irina: *All* of us must go.
Olga: Such a big step.
Masha: Nonsense! We'd avoid the steppes. Forever.
Irina: You mean the sticks.
Olga: That's a river.
Masha: Ah, literature! Oh, my loved ones, Moscow is the heart of our culture. We must go!
Olga: Not that again! *(Pause)* I find Tolstoy unaccountably leonine.
Masha: I have a maxim for Gorki.
Irina: How can Madame Chekhova possibly learn her husband's lines without trying to read between them?
Olga: If only Chekhov would get on with the action. He's tedious.
Masha: True. All startings and stoppardings.

PATRICK SNAITH

Coward: *Hedda Gabler*

(Enter Brandt, very large and even more indignant.)

B: You could have killed me with that shot!
Hedda: It would be typical of you to let yourself *be* killed and ruin my seating arrangements.
B: No doubt you would have blamed me for it.
H: Why not? I'm told I can't hit the side of a barn, but if the barn comes wandering up the garden path in the middle of my target practice . . .
B: You're always going on about my size. I can't help it, it runs in the family.
H: Nothing runs in your family.
B: All Norwegians are large: it's sitting around waiting for that midnight sun to stop that does it.
H: Yes, very fat, Nor-folk.

DOMINIC d'ANGELO

Runyon: *Swann's Way*

'When I am a little kid', says Frog Marcel, 'I am often staying up country with my great-aunt. Furthermore, Sundays, this old doll gives me a cake, such as is sold at Bluntchli's delicatessen, called a madeleine, crumbled in lime-flower tea. Well, in all my years I am not recalling those times. Then, one day, feeling not so good in the stomach, I am dunking a madeleine in tea, though I am a guy who does not drink tea as a regular proposition, when, just like a movie flash-back, I am remembering everything. And more than somewhat, at that.'

MAY DAY

Wodehouse: *L'Etranger*

Mater gave the old bucket one last hoof today. Mind you, it could have been yesterday. The cable from the Happy Valley wallahs is bally uncertain if you ask me. *The old girl has just had a rather bad bout of rigor mortis. The dig is tomorrow. Sorry and all that.* All rather rum. I mean, yesterday isn't out of the question. The aforesaid Happy Valley Home is a fair old hike from Algiers, at some watering-hole called Marengo. So I can probably make it before the shades of night draw in and all that.

BILL GREENWELL

Hemingway: *Madame Bovary*

The first time I met the Bovary kid we were in the classroom and the head teacher came in and the kid was with him. He was dressed like a hick and another kid, an older kid, carried his desk. The desk was big and new and you could not tell it from the other desks. The Bovary kid was big and new too, but you knew he would not be like any other kid. Some kid.

We used to play the cap game. We all had caps. When you got to the door you would throw the cap at the wall and it would make a soft plopping noise and you would see the dust rise. When you threw the cap well you would see the dust and that would feel good and if you missed you would feel good anyway, if you had truly thrown your cap. But the Bovary kid could not see this.

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

SWALLOW IT WHOLE

Hannah Wright on the number one US food fear – salt

WHEN my cousin Paddy was very little, he was asked what he would give up for Lent. 'Salt', he said boldy, and then *sotto voce*, 'I don't like salt anyway'. Most babies are indifferent to salt, which is added to baby foods only to please adult tastes. Heinz's Mr Stanniforth, of quality control, says that when they test marketed salt-free baby foods, mothers would taste and then add a lot of salt. They therefore returned to light pre-salting as the less of two evils.

The physiological need for the sodium in salt is real but minute. It is estimated to be about 1.2g. of salt but our average consumption is about ten times that.

Sodium also figures in our diet in the form of sodium bicarbonate (in baking powder, self-raising flour, cakes and so on) and also in monosodiumglutamate and other additives. The Japanese aren't great scone eaters. But 1 tablespoon of soy sauce

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contains 2.6g. of salt, while salt fish and pickled vegetables are staple foods. As a result their salt intake ranges upwards from 15g. per day; in some villages the inhabitants consume an average of 30g. or a heaped tablespoon of salt daily. Forty per cent of these villagers have high blood pressure (hypertension). In the less salt-enslaved US the rate of hypertension sufferers is thought to be 17 per cent; in the UK it is about 15 per cent, but could be 25 per cent if you include all the border-line cases (who would stop being borderline if salt intake rose).

It is not possible to self-diagnose high blood pressure (though measurement kits are now sold in the US). In fact, people often feel rather well and zippy with it. But hypertension is conclusively linked to that delicately misnamed thunderbolt, the stroke, which if it does not kill, can leave a trail of expense, family suffering, and near idiocy. Life insurance chappies are well aware of this. The Sun Life salesman's manual rates high blood pressure as a major risk factor, which, in certain circumstances, makes a client's life uninsurable.

There is a direct correlation between a population's salt intake (or rather sodium intake) and its blood pressure. As Dr Lot Page of Boston proved in a six-year, six-tribe study in the Soloman Islands, a tribe with a high salt intake will have lots of hypertensives, a tribe with a low salt intake will have few or none. On the other hand the risk of salt depletion or starvation (especially in a temperate climate with an increasingly sedentary population) is slight.

Though the numbers of people susceptiple to high blood pressure climbs with a rising salt intake, individuals seem to be genetically prone to it, or not. Nor is a high salt intake the only factor in the condition, though it is probably the most important. Overweight, age and alcohol intake are also factors. A man in his seventies with high blood pressure, who likes a drink or two and has a bit of a tum, would have to make a really massive difference to his long-accustomed life style to bring his blood pressure down to a safer level, even if his salt intake were no greater than his neighbour's. But there is also a better-than-evens chance that he wouldn't even know his blood pressure was high, because only about 40 per cent of the British population have ever had their blood pressure checked, never mind regularly. J. D. Swales, Professor of Medicine at Leicester University, would like to see sodium intake halved in Britain, but feels even more strongly that GPs should test the blood pressure of every patient at every visit.

EVEN IF GPs could be persuaded, this would leave unconsidered the knotty problem of how to halve sodium intake. On 15 March this year, *Time* magazine ran a cover story on salt, calling it the current No. 1. US food fear and saying that 40 per cent of the US population are trying to cut down their salt intake. As a result of this wave of panic, low sodium ranges of products are now widely available, as is 'No salt salt' and by now over one third of all US food products will carry (voluntary) sodium content labelling. Of course it is largely the middle-class Americans who are trying to cut down. My American brother-in-law Dave, who is slim, abstemious university lecturer in his forties with no hypertension, was hypersensitive over salt the last time he stayed with us – almost certainly quite pointlessly for his own future health. But the voices of 50,000 Daves, even though most of their fears are groundless on their own behalf, may be making things better for blacks (who are twice as prone to hypertension) and poor southerners whose diet traditionally includes a lot of salt pork.

In Britain we have done nothing. A mandatory 5 per cent per year reduction in the sodium content of manufactured foods would be mainly unnoticed by the eaters, who, becoming accustomed to less salty tastes would gradually sprinkle less salt themselves (at present, sprinkling accounts for one third of total intake). Clear labelling of sodium content as a percentage of recommended daily intake would also be educative. Neither will occur, due to the food manufacturers' unhealthy grip on the Ministry of Agriculture's regulating food committees. Perhaps spreading panic in the populace is the only way. □

This is the last of Hannah Wright's present series, as Hannah will shortly have a baby. She would like to thank Anne Chinnock M.Sc. (Nut) of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine for her critical, accurate and punctual research on her behalf.

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John Callaghan – The Politics of the Militant Tendency.
Gwyn A. Williams – Land of Our Fathers.
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GAY GRADUATE, 29, tall, interested arts, politics, cooking, travel. Seeks new friends. Box 4451.

HUMOROUS, HUMANIST Hollers Help! Hoping Handsome High-Minded Hero Hears Her. (55-60). 01-878 4749.

INDEPENDENT LADY. Where have cultured men gone, 65-70? Car appreciated. Box 4455.

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IRELAND/LONDON. Attractive, mature Englishwoman, free career/family commitments, seeks permanent relationship educated, communicative man 55+, some achievements/affluence, much warmth, sharing foreign travel, homes, books, music, art, walking, driving. Box 4456.

LECTURER SEEKS sexy, intelligent, female party companion, over 30, for mutual fun. Lancs/London. Box 4477.

LONDON. Affectionate female graduate, cultural interests, votes Labour, seeks tall, non-smoking male, 35-45, for lasting, loving relationship. Box 4464.

LONDON AREA. Professional, graduate male, 29, seeking intelligent, attractive girl, 25-30. Sense of fun essential. Small photo welcome. Box 4460.

LOOKING FOR INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP, exchange, language practice, hospitality, mail order business, etc? Achieve your goal quickly at low cost. 2 I.R.C's for detail. Asiatic Correspondence Club, PO Box 1228, Lahore, Pakistan.

LOVING, ROMANTIC, sensitive, red-haired divorcee, 42, needs similar, middle-class man, to fill gap, as teenage children begin to flee the nest. To be protective, caring and very male, enabling her to be all woman again! Herts. Box 4454.

MALE, 38, professional – reasonable appearance, living in Cornwall. A vegetarian, likes countryside, cats, music, drama, philosophy; seeks passionate, loving female to share life with. Box 4448.

MALE, 33. Interests literature, history, music, humour, films, theatre and cycling. Seeks female for outings and friendship. Box 4475.

MAN, 35, seeks sexy woman over 30. Write Box 4396.

MIDDLE-AGED, PETITE, blonde, intelligent lady, would welcome companion(s) for social activities. Box 4414.

NEW ZEALAND born Canadian professional man, separated, many interests including music, literature and photography, anglophile, visiting Britain August, wishes to meet warm, intelligent feminine woman. Box 4444.

N IRELAND FEMALE, graduate, 30s, interests politics, Labour History and pubs. Seeks lively company or pen-friends. Box 4463.

OXON HEDONIST woman, seeks man 35+, with whom to enjoy theatre, good food and music, conversation, having fun. Box 4471.

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QUITE UNTYPICAL professional man, young 42, slightly under the influence of Zen, believes in life before death, seeks lively unpolitical and rather special woman, to share as much as possible. Box 4410.

SOCIOLOGIST, 51, divorced, seeks company of intelligent, attractive, caring female around Humberside. Box 4461.

TALL, AFFLUENT, intelligent man, 34, seeks sensuous older and passionate lady aged 35-50, preferably with a room to let for a short period. Discretion absolutely assured. Photo (small) if possible, please. All letters answered. Please write explicitly to Box 4395.

UNIVERSITY LECTURER, 28, PhD, Oxbridge background, Indian origin, seeks female friend. Box 4429.

VEGETARIAN ATHEIST man, 33, refuses to be parent, opposes tobacco, alcohol, sport, conscription, nukes; supports legal hash, ecology, equality. Agree, write? Box 4467.

WIDOWER (Central London), 64, seeks occasional companionship of a cultured, sensuous lady. Box 4465.

WIDOW, middle-aged plus, lives West End London, needs male companionship, preferably of widower, semi-retired or retired, equally well-off, stable, good character, with liking for laughter, finer things of life, not reactionary; accent on travel, music, theatre, country walking and evenings at home. Box 4450.

WOMAN, 40s, widow, teacher, desires more male company. Interested arts. Box 4462.

WRITE FOR Money – with Wordsmith, the new writer's newsletter. Details: Wordsmith, Dept W1, 151 Harefields, Oxford.

YORKSHIRE LADY, divorced, professional, attractive, seeks male partner, 38-48, humorous, affectionate, to share life and country home. Box 4466.

YOUNG MIDDLE-AGED working man, needs non-political, attractive lady, no ties, to share active life sport, social caring, not necessarily in that order. Box 4476.

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LISTINGS

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Radical/Arts
Political

30 July-7 Aug

SEND DETAILS to: NS FREE LISTINGS at least 7 days in advance

FRI 30 JULY

LONDON WC2. Southern Africa Freedom concert – JAZIRA, 8.30 p.m. Africa Centre, 38 King St. £3 (u/w £2).

30 JULY-1 AUGUST. NOTTINGHAM. SHELTER's National Conference. 'A Future for Rented Housing', at University of Nottingham. Details from Kate Hewlett, Shelter, 157 Waterloo Road, London SE1. Tel. **01-633 9377 ext 37.**

LONDON SW1. Bombay film season, ICA. 'Mother India,' 7.35 p.m. until 4 Aug. 'Chandralekha', 1.50 p.m. and 'Mere Huzoor', 4.45 p.m., 30 July. 'Aan', 4.25 p.m., 31 July. 'Kabhi Kabhie', 4.40 p.m., 1 Aug. 'Amar, Akbar, Anthony', 4.25 p.m., 3 Aug. Tickets £2.50, ICA, The Mall. Tel. **01-930 3647.**

LONDON SW1. 'Scanners' – Cronenberg film season. 6.30 and 8.30 p.m. until 1 Aug. £1.75. ICA, The Mall. Tel. **01-930 3647.**

LONDON N6. 'On Sacred Ground' and 'Walyangahardki: The Land My Mother'. 2 films about Australian Aboriginal land rights followed by discussion with Shorty O'Neill. 8 p.m. £1.50 (80p u/w). Jackson Lane Community Centre, Archway Rd. (opp. Highgate tube).

SAT 31 JULY

MANCHESTER. Workers Against Racism – Dayschool, 4.30 p.m. Longsight Library, Stockport Rd., Longsight. Tel. **01-274 3951.**

LONDON SW4. 'Marx & Alienation'. P. Lawrence. 7.30 p.m. 52 Clapham High St.

LONDON E9. Big Jumble Sale in aid of Chile Committee For Human Rights. 2 p.m.-4.30 p.m. Chats Palace, 42/44 Brooksby's Walk.

LONDON N1. Troops Out Delegation fundraiser. Disco, food. £1 (50p u/w) 8 p.m. 'Prince Albert' Pub, Wharfedale Rd.

SUN 1 AUGUST

CROYDON. Masked Orchestra, Tollygunge, Ian Pulèston Davies at Warehouse, 62 Dingwall Rd. £1.50 (£1 uw). Tel. **01-680 4060.**

LONDON WC1. An evening with Joan Baez inc. songs, film 'Joan Baez in Latin America' and reception. 7 p.m. Bloomsbury Theatre, Gordon St. Tickets/details: **01-387 9629.** Proceeds to Humanitas/UK.

BRIGHTON. 'Film and Psychoanalysis' – course of screenings and discussion workshops. This week 'Freud – The Secret Passion' (John Huston). 7 p.m. Hanover Centre, Southover St. Whole course £7, single screenings £1.50 (£1 u/w).

LONDON N1. 13 Years On'. Islington Troops Out Movement meeting. Film, sokr., discussion. 8 p.m. Hemingford Arms, Offord Rd.

LONDON SW1. Contemporary classical concert '20 Canti del Capricorno' by Giacinto Scelsi, with Michiko Hirayama (Soprano), John Harle (saxophone), David Balen and James Wood (percussion). 8 p.m., ICA, The Mall. £3. Tel. **01-930 3647.**

LONDON SE1. 'Lebanon and after'. Meeting to voice Jewish opposition to Israeli invasion. 7.30 p.m., Conference Hall, County Hall.

MON 2 AUGUST

LONDON W1. 'Boxing in 19th Century.' History Workshop Seminar. 6.45pm. Upstairs at Black Horse, 6 Rathbone Place.

2-4 AUGUST, LONDON WC2. Films nightly at 7 p.m. at the Africa Centre, 38 King St.

CROYDON 2-4 AUG. ANDY SMITH in solo performance. "Wild and unpredictable." "Genuinely funny . . ." 7.30 p.m. £2.50. Croydon Warehouse Theatre, 62 Dingwall Rd., Tel. **01-680 4060.**

TUES 3 AUGUST

LONDON SW1. 'The History of Island' Video compilation of classics from famous record company. 6.30 and 8.30 p.m. £1.25. ICA, The Mall, Tel. **01-930 3647.**

WEDS 4 AUGUST

4-8 AUGUST, LONDON NW1. 'Writers Inc'. TV Comedy Writers in performance. £1.75. 9.30 p.m. York and Albany Theatre Club, 129 Parkway. Tel: **01-387 9541.**

LONDON WC1. 'Russia in the Eighties' – Kathleen Williams. Central London Fabian Soc., Mary Ward House, 5 Tavistock Place. 7.30 p.m.

4-11 AUGUST, BERLIN. Second Assembly of The Fourth World (For Small Nations, Small Communities and The Human Spirit). Numerous forums. S.a.e. to: 24 Abercorn Place, London, NW8.

THURS 5 AUGUST

CROYDON 5-7 AUG. Tara Arts Group perform "Scenes in the life of . . ." by Jatinder Verma. 7.30 p.m. £2.50. Croydon Warehouse Theatre, 62 Dingwall Rd. Tel. **01-680 4060.**

FRI 6 AUGUST

GREENOCK. Hiroshima Day Vigil on Lyle Hill overlooking Holy Loch. Tel. **0475-22230.**

LONDON WC1. Hiroshima Day ceremony. Assemble 12 noon by Peace Cherry Tree, Tavistock Sq. Org. by Camden CND. Spkrs. inc. Billie Whitelaw, Prof. Sir John Humphrey, Marie Patterson.

LONDON SW1. 6-14 AUG. 'The Joy of Mooching' featuring 20 bands, guest MCs and surprise attractions. 7.30 p.m. £3. ICA, The Mall. Tel. **01-930 3647.**

SAT 7 AUGUST

GREENOCK. Peace March & Rally. From Wellpark to Battery Park. 11am. Tel. **0475 22230.**

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad. under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

MANCHESTER. "Between the Bombs". Peace Festival with Music, Drama, Workshops. Speakers. Manchester Cathedral.

FORTHCOMING

6 AUGUST, LONDON SW2. Cherry Tree ceremony to mark anniversaries of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Assemble 11.45. St Matthews' Meeting Place, Brixton Hill. Tel: **01-670 3796.**

11 AUGUST to 17 SEP., BIRMINGHAM. Exhibition – RODIN and his Contemporaries. Includes 'The Thinker'. Museum & Art Gallery, Chamberlain Square. Tel. **021-235 2834.** Free.

12 AUGUST. GLOSSOP, DERBYSHIRE. public meeting of El Salvador Solidarity Campaign. 7.30 p.m. The 'Star Inn', Nr. Station.

18 AUGUST, LONDON SW1. 'Labour and the House of Lords' – Reg Underhill. Central London Fabian Soc., 11 Dartmouth St. 7.30 p.m.

26-27 AUGUST, EDINBURGH. Radio Meeting Challenges: 3rd Annual Edinburgh International Radio Festival. Contact Jamie Jauncey on 0672 810034 or **01-439 9756.**

28 AUGUST, PORTSMOUTH. Radio Victory Free Folk and Caelidh in the Guildhall Square. Features Maddy Prior. Tel. **0705-834184.**

28-29 AUGUST, 4-5 SEPT. Krishnamurti speaks at Brockwood Park, Bramdean, Nr. Alresford, Hants. Q&A meetings 31 Aug., 2 Sept.

AUGUST, NIGHTLY. LONDON SW13. Live Jazz at the 'Bulls Head', Lonsdale Road.

1 SEPTEMBER. LONDON SW1. 'Euro-elections' – Richard Balfe, MEP. Cent Lond. Fabian Soc. County Hall. 7.30 p.m.

4-8 SEPTEMBER. LONDON to BRIGHTON – Workers March Against Racism from Brick Lane to TUC Conference in Brighton. Details **01-274 3951. W.A.R.**

6 SEPTEMBER, LONDON W1. 'Ladies and Nurses in the Crimean War.' History Workshop Seminar. 6.45pm. Upstairs at the Black Horse, 6 Rathbone Place.

15 SEPTEMBER. LONDON WC1. 'Tribune Today' – Jon Lansman. Cent. Lond. Fabian Soc. Mary Ward House, 5 Tavistock Place. 7.30 p.m.

25 SEPTEMBER, MANCHESTER. 'Foreign Policy Implications of British Nuclear Disarmament', Dayshool at Withington Adult Education Centre, Mauldeth Rd., M14. 10am-4pm. Details: 59 Tintern Ave., Manchester M20 8ND.

4 OCTOBER. LONDON W1. 'A Social Democratic Interpretation of History' – Peter Clarke. History Workshop seminar. 6.45 p.m., Upstairs at the 'Black Horse', 6 Rathbone Place.

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THEATRE GOERS please note: cc – Credit cards S-Student standby.

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